

Aspects from the history of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe

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1. Incursions in the history of Europe in Central and Eastern Europe (XIXth century – 1945)

At the end of XIXth century, in the Tsarist Empire was living a numerous Jewish population, more than 5 000 000 of persons.¹ During the reign of the tsars Alexander I and Nicolae I, the Jewish populations from Russian Empire passed to Christian religion and through a process of Russification. Nicolae I imposed to the Jewish masses a military service of 25 of years. Since 1840, the Jewish population lost their autonomy and there had been created non-religious schools and state schools. The confessional schools that were named *Heder* were closed. During the last part of the XIXth century, the Tsarist politics supported the local pogroms and the emigration of Jews abroad. In Russia, the Jewish minority co-existed together with Russian ethnics as a separated community characterized by traditionalism and mysticism. During this time, in the Jewish culture from Russia it appeared the Enlightenment which had as purpose the learning by the Jews of Russian language and the assimilation of Russian culture.

We can state that in Russia it always existed a state antisemitism which manifested during the pogroms. As a consequence, it followed a wave of pogroms during the years 1881- 1884 at Kiev, Odessa, White Russia, Lithuania. In 1881 it appeared in Russia the idea of *numerus clausus* which stipulated the limitation of Jewish students from Russian universities. In 1891, almost 20 000 of Jews were evacuated from Moscow. Nicolae the IInd (1894-1917) was especially hostile to the Jews. There are the years when it is published in Russia the writings *The Protocol of the Elders of Zion*, an antisemite writing that asserted that the Jews are following world's dominance.

Also, during the XIXth century, there were developed the Zionist ideas, the secular Jewish nationalism. It manifested mainly in Austro- Hungary and in Russia. In Russia, Zionism was promoted by the writer Leon Pinsker and in Austro – Hungary by Theodor Herzl. The proper place that Herzl had in mind for the creation of the new Jewish state was Palestina or Argentina. Slowly, it was imposed the idea that the new Jewish state should be organized according to the rules from Torah. Another territory proposed by the English was Uganda.

Prepuk Anikó underlines that the European Jews aggregated two movements: radical bourgeois and socialist². The first movement attracted the Jewry that belonged to bourgeois category with a high economic level. The poor ones were

¹ Prepuk Aniko, *A zsidóság közép és kelet – Európában (The Jewry in Eastern Europe)*, Történelmi kézikönyvtár, Csokonai Kiadó, 1997, p. 84.

² *Ibidem*, p. 128.

attracted by the socialist ideas, were animated by the ideal of a superior society that implied the end of the society organized on capitalist bases. In Russia, the system changed directly from the agrarian society to the communist one without passing through industrialization phase. The Marxism, Bolshevism although aggregated a large number of Jews does not have to be identified with the whole Jewish community³.

It is more known the important role played by the Jewry in the spreading of communist and socialist ideas, but in Central and Eastern Europe, the Jews played also another role, having important positions in industry and banking system, but also in the cultural life. In Germany, the Jewry got involved in the construction of railways and in the fields of economy concerning the working and the exploitation of iron and coal.

In Hungary, the Jewry got aggregated in agriculture, then in industry and banking system. The involvement of Jews in economy was the reason for which the Jews got assimilated in Hungary and Central and Eastern Europe. In spite of inter-communities marriages and of passing of certain Jews to Christianity, the assimilation was not total because of the hostilities from religious reasons that were promoted against the Jews. In Hungary, more Hungarian ethnics were hostile to the Jews. After the Jewry got assimilated, after 1867, the Jewry received political rights equal with the ones of Hungarian ethnics. Slowly, the Hungarian Jewry adopted Hungarian traditions and names. There are obvious Hungarian culture influences on Jewish culture through the apparition of Jewish journals in Hungarian language.

In Hungary, in 1919, the power was taken over by the communists of Kun Bela. After the defeat of the Revolution, the scapegoats were considered the Jews, not only the Bolsheviks being punished, but also the liberal ones. Through the Treaty of Trianon, the historical Hungary disappeared and 48% of the total Jewry spread in the successor states of the former Austro-Hungary. The law *numerus clausus* by which set limits to the number of Jewish students studying in Universities, dates back in Hungary since 1920. This law was condemned by the League of Nations. In May 1938, there had been elaborated the anti- Jewish laws which defined the Jews according to racial criteria. They had as purpose the reduction of the role of Jewry in public and economic space. The Jews from the army could have been used only to forced labor. All the Jews were institutionally isolated. The anti- Jewish policy was stimulated by the services which Hungary must make to Hitler concerning the North of Transylvania.

In the states from Eastern and Central Europe, in the modern epoch, the Jewry had taken over national languages, borrowed elements specific to national cultures in the states they lived in and contributed to the creation of a healthy environment.

During the interwar period, in Central and Eastern Europe, the anti-Semitism exacerbated. The nationalism and xenophobia were fed by the economic crises and moral crises of the societies. In the whole Central and Eastern Europe was a real scarcity of food, and the Jews played an important role in supplying ailments to the

³ *Ibidem*, p. 129.

hungered population⁴. As a consequence, they were considered scapegoats for the precarious situation in which their societies lived in. On the other hand, another cause of anti-Semitism was the adhesion of the Jews to leftist revolutionary movements and the existence of some political leaders of Jewish origin in front of Bolshevik Russia and Hungary. In Hungary, the leader of Bolshevik revolution was Kun Bela, Jew. In Romania, during the interwar period, were Jews that became leaders in illegality of Communist Party such as Ana and Marcel Pauker that collaborated with Moscow.

During the years 1930, it takes place the apparition of movements of right wing orientation in Central and Eastern Europe which exacerbated the nationalism of people and the hate against the Jews.

At the end of First World War, the Jewish population from these countries presented their complaints in their national states asking for equal rights with local inhabitants. In the debates concerning the Treaty of Paris, the Jews militated for the protection of their national minority rights. They were the years in which the emigration to Palestine was allowed, the Balfour Declaration mentioning that here it would be possible the creation of "Jewish national homeland". The Balfour declaration was opening the gate to the Jews in order to create their own state in Palestine, without discriminating the ones of other religion⁵.

In Poland, in 1921 there was a numerous Jewish population, 2.850. 000 namely 10,5% of the total population.⁶ After the First World War, Poland become again united as a national state, as a buffer state between Russia and Germany. The Orthodox Jews grouped around the organization Agudat Israel while non-religious Jews supported leftist movements such as BUND that represented the interests of Polish working class. The Jewish Zionists from Poland grouped around the movement Poalei Zion of leftist socialist orientation and Poalei Zion with an orthodox dimension. During the interwar years, in Poland, the Zionist movement was very popular, developed in the context of anti-Semitism and Polish nationalism. During the years 1930, in Poland there were imposed anti-Jewish laws. As a consequence, during the years 1930- 1936 emigrated from Poland about 80 000 of Jews in Palestine. Poland was one of the countries most affected by the Second World War. The largest part of Polish Jewry died in Holocaust. The perception of the historians from former communist states on Holocaust was to blame only the Germans for Holocaust or to minimize the contribution of their countries to the purges against the Jews. Jean- Charles Szurek in the article *Juifs et Polonais (1918-1939)* shows that in the Polish space it had been existing two different historical

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 133.

⁵ We quote here the text of Declaration, document enacted by Foreign Office at November 2, 1917 by Arthur James Balfour: "His Majesty's Government view will favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non – Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation". See *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration_of_1917, accessed in October 1, 2009.

⁶ Prebuk, *op.cit.*, p. 141.

writings, one belonging to the Polish nationals and one belonging to minorities and to Jewish segment of population, in particular. He tried to draw the characteristics of Polish and Jewish historiographies, the last one for the period 1918- 1939. While the Jews see Poland as a place of genocide and, in consequence, of commemoration, the Polish historians are not still aware of this aspect:⁷ “For <<Polish>> camp, this period is above all, a period of regained independence, after 25 years of cleavages, a partial democratic regime, a place more or less important in Europe, a relative tolerance for national minorities. It had to be signaled here that the interwar period was often overestimated in Poland by political opponents from the years 70 and 80: it was compared then, on the expense of communist regime, a type of authoritarian regime with another. The appeal to “independent” historian must have constituted an answer to “official” history. It has to be noted that, after the fall of communist regime, Poland of the interwar years is seen in a more critical manner.

[...] They were thus two historiographies that were confronting each other. An objective analysis was not yet achieved, both for the period 1918- 1939, but also for the one of German occupation and even for postwar period. In general, the Jewish memory identifies the word *Poland* physically as a symbolic place of Genocide. It is the symbol of the death, of real Poland which was understood only later and, again, grace to the action of “remembrance” of a few Catholic intellectuals. The Auschwitz problem demonstrates the distance that separated the two memories”. [transl.]

In Austria, after the First World War, the Jewish population was more reduced and concentrated, mainly, in Vienna. And also here, the hunger and poverty existent after the war exacerbated the anti-Semitism. A lot of Jews handled illegal commerce in a context of deep poverty, aspect that generated the Austrians’ discontent. The most nationalist party was Nationalist Christian Party, the Nazis. After the Nazi occupation, the anti-Semitism grew. It was introduced anti- Jewish legislation and the Jewish students were excluded from universities.

In Czechoslovakia, in interwar period time, the situation of Jewry was better in comparison with the one of other Jews from other states from Central and Eastern Europe. The Jewish Communities from Czechoslovakia enjoyed the same rights with native inhabitants. The most numerous were the Jewry from towns, more closely connected with the German culture, in comparison with the Jewry from the country which took over the Czech language. The Jewry from Slovakia was loyal to Hungarian state, fact that aroused Slovakian’s discontent. The Czech national movement had the support of the Jewry in the fight with Slovak and German separatism. In Czechoslovakia, the Zionist idea had few adepts in the interwar period, very few Jews from here wanting to emigrate. The condition of the Jewry remained good in Czechoslovakia until the end of the years 1930. In September 29, 1938 when it was signed the Agreement from München, the Czech government rallied to the right wing politics. The Jewish intellectuals and students were excluded from universities.

⁷ Jean – Charles Szurek, *Juifs et Polonais (1918- 1939)* in *Les cahiers de la Shoah*, n.1, 1994. See <http://www.anti-rev.org/textes/Szurek94a/body.html>, accessed at October 1, 2008.

The interwar period time opens for Romania under the auspices of democracy and rights granted to minorities. The new Romania, more extended, included also Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bucovina. An important role in the new state was belonging to the Jewry that had confronted no more with discriminatory laws, on the country guaranteed them equal rights with the Romanian ethnics. A document of the epoch, revealing a democrat spirit, is also the Treaty regarding the minorities signed by Romania in Paris, at December 8, 1919⁸. Thus, by article 2 of the Treaty, Romanian government undertook the obligation to protect life and liberty of the citizens of Romania no matter of the language, race or religion, being in the same time guaranteed also their religious freedom. Romania undertook the obligation to grant citizenship to the Jews born in Romania or living in Romania according to article 7 and to guarantee the same civil, political rights for all citizens and free access to public functions according to the article 8. Through de decree of law from May 28, 1919, Romania granted citizen rights to the Jews born in the country, but also to the ones who fought in the First World War together with their families, even if they were not born in the country⁹. Later, in 1933, when nationalist stances started to affect the Romanian society, we see that the Program of Jewish Party from Romania was of democrat nature and the fidelity towards Romanian nation was consecrated by this program¹⁰. Among the guiding principles of this party, we remark “The personal identification with Romanian nation on the ground of the devotion towards the throne, love for the country and faith in the state idea”. It was militated for the emancipation of ethnical minorities and the Jewish people faith in democracy. In 1940, when the international situation became tensed, it is enacted a decree of law concerning the judicial situation of the Jews in Romania¹¹. The document defined as Jews the people with mosaic religion, but also the members of Jewish families. The Jews could be elected no more in “the councils and leading committees of free professions and jobs”. In turn for military service they were obliged to fiscal payments or to work in the public benefit. Also according to this decree the Jews could not get rural properties.

During the authoritarian regime of Carol IInd and of the Antonescian regime, the rights of Jews were a lot restrained. Radu Ioanid describes other restrictions imposed to the Jews. Thus, they can not sell products which constituted the monopoly of the state, could not practice all kind of jobs, they were excluded from the professional Associations such as Association of doctors, the Union of Writers, the

⁸ Tratatul privind minoritățile (*The treaty concerning the minorities*) in Ioan Scurtu, Theodora Stănescu-Stanciu, Georgiana Margareta Scurtu, *Istoria Românilor între anii 1918- 1940* (*The History of Romanians during 1918- 1940*), See: <http://ebooks.unibuc.ro/istorie/istorie1918-1940/10-3.htm>, accessed at July 1, 2008.

⁹ Decree of Law concerning the granting of the citizens rights of the Jews born in the country, in Ioan Scurtu, Theodora Stănescu - Stanciu, Georgiana Margareta Scurtu, *op.cit.*, Internet: <http://ebooks.unibuc.ro/istorie/istorie1918-1940/10-1.htm>, accessed at July 1, 2008.

¹⁰ The program of Jewish Party from Romania, in Ioan Scurtu, Theodora Stănescu – Stanciu, Georgiana Margareta Scurtu, *Istoria Românilor între anii 1918- 1940*, *op. cit.*, Internet: <http://ebooks.unibuc.ro/istorie/istorie1918-1940/10-8.htm>, accessed at July 1, 2008.

¹¹ *Ibidem*. Decree- law concerning the judicial situation of Jewish inhabitants from Romania, See: <http://ebooks.unibuc.ro/istorie/istorie1918-1940/10-13.htm>, accessed at July 1, 2008.

Society of Architects. In 1940, it was prohibited by law the possibility that the Jews to be professor or students. The forced labor becomes compulsory. During the governance of Ion Antonescu, a part of the Jewish population from Bessarabia, Bucovina was deported in Transnistria. Ghettos and concentration camps existed in Bessarabia, Bucovina and Transnistria. The Jews of North- Western Transylvania, found under Horthy's dominance were deported in German concentration camps¹².

In North- West Transylvania, taken over by Hungary through the Dictate of Vienna from August 30, 1940, the new master imposed new grave accents on the daily existence of the Jews from the territory: "The official policy of Hungary in the Jewish problem, during the period between the two World Wars was starting from these racial concepts funded on economic and social bases existent then. The politics towards the Jews which were taken over by the Romanian state, after the Dictate of Vienna, at the beginning started the restrain by law of the activity and influence of the Jews in the economic and social field, after which it followed measures of liquidation of the Jewish problem. It was funded in the first place on motivations on political and ideological nature, basing on the obtainment of economic benefits in the benefit of Hungarian state. In the vision of nationalists and revisionist Hungarian politicians, the Jewry from this territory was considered as a political adversary of the Hungarian state and of the regime established after 1940. Political forces of right wing orientation until the fascist ones, qualified the Jewry from this areal as a declared enemy, and its existence as being incompatible with social and state life existent in Hungary. In consequence, it had no more place in Hungary and even less in the occupied Romanian territory"¹³. [transl.] If the attitude was critical towards the politics of Hungary towards the Jews during the Holocaust, a lot of Romanian historians are very cautious and do not dare to criticize Romania for the faith of the Jews from the Old Kingdom who were subjected sometimes to local pogroms, to the anti-Semite legislation of the regime of Ion Antonescu and, some of them, even to deportation in Transnistria. The fact can be explained through the identity crisis of Romanians after the Revolution. The critic addressed to the anti-Semite Hungarian politics and the description of difficult life conditions endured by the Jews from North-West of Transylvania and the Hungarian ones are very well achieved and described with a lot of critical spirit in the work of Vasile T. Ciubăncan, Maria I. Ganea, Ion V. Ranca, *Drumul Holocaustului. Calvarul evreilor din nord-vestul Transilvaniei sub ocupația Ungariei 5 IX 1940 – 25 X 1944*. The authors acknowledge the negative role of Hungary in the deportation of Jewry, they did not make prove of negationism, blaming only the Germans for Holocaust. In their opinion, Hungary could not forgive to the Jewry from Transylvania that it was solidar with the union of

¹² Radu Ioanid, *Răscumpărarea evreilor. Istoria acordurilor secrete dintre România și Israel (The ransom of the Jews. The history of secret bargains between Romania and Israel)*, Polirom, 2005, p. 19-80.

¹³ Vasile T. Ciubăncan, Maria I. Ganea, Ion V. Ranca, *Drumul Holocaustului. Calvarul evreilor din nord-vestul Transilvaniei sub ocupația Ungariei 5 IX 1940 – 25 X 1944*, (*The way of Holocaust. The tragedy of the Jews from North-West of Transylvania under Hungary's occupation 5 IX 1940 – 25 X 1944*), Editura Ciubăncan, Cluj – Napoca, 1995, p. 15.

Transylvania with Romania and, being completely magyarized it asserted its ethical identity in the Romanian state.

The analysis of the Hungarian politics during the war is seen in a larger framework of Hungarian politics on nationalities which reverberated with hostility on all non- Hungarians from the new Hungary.

We illustrate here two tables conceived by Vasile T. Ciubăncan, Maria I. Ganea, Ion V. Ranca and based on their own research. It is about a table that describes the probable population on the criterion of nationality, before and after the deportations of the Jews and the imposed changes, respectively another table which details the modifications produced by deportation of the Jews in May – June 1944. We are aware, that in North-West of Transylvania, as it results from the first table a great variety of ethnies (Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Jews, Russians, Rutenians, Gypsies, Ukrainians, others).

Table 1¹⁴. The probable population on the criterion of nationality, before and after the deportation of the Jews and the changes produced in North-West of Transylvania:

Data of registration	The total of population	Romanians	Hungarians	Germans	Jews	Russians, Rutenians, Ukainians	Gypsies	Others
31.VII. 1940	2.630.443	1.322.768	975.275	71.513	149.392	31.559	49.272	33.969
Procents	100%	50.28%	37.07%	2.71%	5.68%	1.19%	1.87%	1.29%
1.V. 1944	2.764.128	1.100.768	1.385.000	23.900	156.228	33000	51000	21.300
Procents	100%	39.82%	50.10%	0.50%	5.65%	1.19%	1.80%	0.77%
(+,-)	+133.685	-222.000	+409.725	-47 000	+6.836	+255	+1.728	-12.669
Procents	+4.83%	-8.03%	+14.82%	-2.04%	0.74%	+ 0.52%	+0,62%	-4.58%

Table 2¹⁵. The modifications produced by the deportation of the Jews from Nord-Western Transylvania in May – June 1944

Data of registration	The total of population	Romanians	Hungarians	Germans	Jews	Russians, Rutenians, Ukrainians	Gypsies	Others
30.VI.1944	2.607.900	1.100.768	1.385.000	23.900	0	33.000	51.000	21.300
Procents	100%	42.20%	53.10%	0.90%	0%	1.26%	1.95%	0.80%
(+,-)	-156.228				156.228			

We observe that by the deportation of the Jews from May – June 1944, 156. 228 of Jews from Transylvania died.

The authors make a description of the anti – Jewish laws taken by Hungarian governments that succeeded in Hungary after the occupation of the North- West of Transylvania. By the decree of law 1750/ 1942 M.E. were confiscated the Jewish agrarian properties and forests. By the law from September 1942 concerning the

¹⁴ The table was detailed in Ciubăncan et al., *op.cit.*, p. 28.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

above mentioned goods “it was forbidden to the Jews the right of receiving forest and agricultural properties or right to use of some buildings both on the way of judicial transactions, but also by acquisition, and in the villages not even to use immobile goods”¹⁶.

In March 22, 1944, the government Kállay Miklós was replaced by the one of Sztójay Döme, former ambassador of Hungary to Berlin, during whose governance there were adopted the anti- Jewish laws. By the decree of law no. 1240/1944, it was imposed the wearing of yellow star as a distinctive sign for the Jews, which had to be worn by each Jew, older than six years old. The Article 1 of this law stipulated: “In the moment when the present decree enters into force, each Jewish person who has at least 6 years old – no matter if there is woman or men- is obliged to wear outside the house, on the superior side of the cloth, a yellow star in format of 10x10 cm”, made of cloths as cloth, silk or velvet”¹⁷. [transl.]

The limitation of the activities of the Jews took place also in the field of spiritual Hungarian life. Thus by “Decree of law 10 800/ 1944 ME”, the following problems were mentioned: “It is forbidden the multiplication, publication or circulation of literary works of Jewish authors in the same time with the enter into force of the present decree, especially there can be multiplied or put into circulation papers with a scientific character, only with the approval of the Minister of Cults and Public Instruction, after the previous agreement of Royal Hungarian president of the Council of Ministers”¹⁸.

The decree no. 108 500/ 1944 stipulated the food supply of the Jews. In reality the food (sugar, fat, meat, milk) for the Jews were limited to minimum.

The authors describe the drama of some victims of Holocaust, among whom we remember the girl Eva Heymann, from a family of Jews from Oradea who succeeds in keeping a journal: “My little journal, from now on I will tie of this chain the little key with which I close you, as no one, never, to find out my secrets”¹⁹. (transl.) Eva would have liked to live in a world in which nobody to know that she is a Jew. Eva would have been threatened by the story of Marta, her friend, deported in Poland together with her family. She writes down in the diary an episode where the gendarmes took her bicycle, aspect that aroused her sadness: “I fell down and, lying on my back I surrounded with my arms the bicycle and I shouted to the policemen all that came out of my month: Be blamed! You take the bicycle of a child. This is robbery. One of the policemen was very angry. He said that only this is missing to them, as a child of poor Jew to make such a comedy because it is taken over the bicycle from him. No Jewish child has the right to have bicycle and bread, because the Jews eat the food from the soldiers. Imagine, my little journal, what I felt when all of these were thrown into my face [...]”²⁰. [transl.] The journal continues with images

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 34.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p.35.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 131.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 133.

from the ghetto from Oradea. Eva Heymann was deported to Auschwitz where she died at 17 October, 1944.

Concerning the drama of Holocaust in the extended territory of Hungary, the author Randolph L. Braham makes a portrait of the conditions existent in Hungary in the fatidic year of deportation, 1944: “The Holocaust in Hungary- the last major chapter in the Nazis’ war against the Jews – is replete with paradoxes and controversies. While the Jews in Nazi dominated Europe were being destroyed, the Jews of Hungary – although subjected to severe discriminatory measures and occasional physical abuse – continued to enjoy the protection of Hungarian government until the German occupation on March 19, 1944. After the occupation, however, it was this law abiding highly patriotic Jewish community that was subjected to the most ruthless destruction program of the war. The occupation enabled the German and Hungarian Nazis – each eager but unable to act alone before – to unite their forces in carrying out the Final Solution program at lightning speed. What took years to implement in other parts of Europe, took only a few months in Hungary! By July 9, all of Hungary – with the notable exception of Budapest – had become *Judenrein*.”²¹

In their article, *The economic annihilation of the Hungarian Jews*, Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági talk about the Jewish laws settled in Hungary during the years 1938- 1942. The Hungarian minister of Justice, István Antal, wanted to generate “national wealth” of Hungary by eliminating Hungarian Jews from public and economic life²². The Jews will receive, in turn, governmental subsidies necessary for their survival in deportation and concentration camps. Thus it appeared the idea of “self- financing genocide”. It was, thus, a problem to reintroduce in economy the goods of 760 000 – 780 000 of Jews in just 8-9 months as it lasted the deportation of the Jews from Hungary²³. Pretty often, the local authorities, having in their charge the supervision and evaluation of Jewish assets, committed robberies of the Jewish goods, together with the Gendarmes.

Carol Iancu severely criticizes the participation of Romania to Holocaust²⁴. The author does not forgive from the anti-Semitic policy of Ion Antonescu and of its collaborators in Romania from the years 1940 – 1944. In Greater Romania, the Jews were representing the third minority as number, after the Hungarian or German community, summing up, 728 115 of people as it had been established by the census of 1930²⁵. The author qualifies as a paroxysm the anti-Semite policy of Romania. He draws the attention that, although the Romanian Holocaust is not acknowledged and condemned in Romania, there has been during the years 1940- 1944 an anti-Semite

²¹ Randolph L. Braham, “The Holocaust in Hungary: Some issues and problems” in Randolph L. Braham and Attila Pók (Eds.), *The Holocaust in Hungary. Fifty years later*, Columbia University Press, 1997.

²² Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, “The economic annihilation of the Hungarian Jews, 1944- 1945”, in Randolph L. Braham and Brewster S. Chamberlin (Eds.), *The Holocaust in Hungary: Sixty Years Later*, Columbia University Press, Washington, 2006, p. 78.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 79.

²⁴ Carol Iancu, *Shoah în Romania. Evreii în timpul regimului Antonescu [1940-1944]* (*Shoah in Romania. The Jews during the regime of Antonescu [1940- 1944]*), Polirom, 2001.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

legislation that promoted: “the forbiddance of mixt marriages, of wearing of some Romanian names and of conversion to Christianity of the Jews, the elimination of Jews from all the sectors of public life, and in some regions the obligation to wear the yellow star – to these actions there were added the actions of legionary police which started by robbery of Jewish goods”²⁶. [transl.] It took place pogroms at Bucharest and Iassy which caused numerous victims. In consequence, it is asserted that racial politics of Romania did not have in mind only the anti- Jewish legislation, but also the removal of the Jews from frontier regions: “In parallel with the legislative persecutions, the government of Ion Antonescu removed ten of thousands of Jews from the frontier regions (“the evacuated persons from the cities and villages loosing a lot of goods, robbed, in most times, by their Christian neighbors before of being captured), before the attack against Soviet Union to which Romania will participate”²⁷. [transl.] More than that, the Jews from Bessarabia and Bucovina were deported after the date of September 14, 1941. The governor of Transnistria, Gheorghe Alexianu, remarked for its cruelty: “The decision from November 11, 1941 of the governor of Transnistria, Gheorghe Alexianu, shows that the deportees were installed in colonies especially organized, brought together in ghettos, concentration and work camps: the regime imposed was terrifying. Forced to work until they’re burned out, hungered, they fell pray to contagious illnesses and, bearing brutal treatments, shut for any disobedience at the order of authorities, they died ten of thousands. The evacuations in Transnistria were stopped in January 1942 and August, 2388 in September and Octomber”. Among the very few benefactors who intervened in the favor of Jews it was Nicolae Bălan, the mitropolite of Orthodox Romanian Church from Transylvania and the monsenior Andrea Cassulo. Carol Iancu contradicts Raul Hilberg who talks in strict terms about Romanian Holocaust, asserting tha in none of the occupied countries by the Axis, the number of survivors was not so high (355.972) and that starting from 1942 the massacres were stopped, but not also the antisemite measures”. [transl.]

The interviews with the Jews from Romania that were deported in Transnistria offer a direct contact with the survivors, being conducted in a personal manner. Among the interviewees there are also simple people, being in the center of events. We remark among these interviewees Erica Antal, born in Putna and grown up in Cernăuți whose father was a lawyer and the mother was working at home. Among the places where she was deported she remembers the stone career from Cetvertinovca, near the Bug. She tells that: “Then they took us and we left to the stone career from Cetvertinovca. We stayed together with the animals, a few weeks, about two months, and they took us again and we left from Cetvertinovca to Obodovca. They brought us to Ukainians in their houses. Eight persons we stayed in a small room – I was sleeping up, near the fireplace, I remember. I stayed there a lot of times, I don’t know how much. The Ukrainians were decent people: they were behaving with us very nicely, they give us some food – they cut the pigs and they gave us the bacon as it

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

was cut from the pig.”²⁸ The last station to which we had passed was Tatarovca: “In Tatarovca, to say it bluntly, we were going very well. The Ukrainians were behaving really nice, they took us to work camps, they gave us also food...But from time to time, Romanians were coming. And we hid not to take us from there”²⁹. [transl.] Erica Antal considers that the writings of the survivors of Holocaust are real and reveal exactly the sufferance they lived through. These writings offer us by the intermediary of the oral or written testimony, the possibility to reconstitute the past: “- It was not written absolutely nothing untrue. In vain, it is told that Antonescu did not deport us. He deported us, he decided to deport us. To know, we were the last deported group – we had such a bad luck to be in that group...”³⁰. [transl.] Her father was hardly convinced not to remain in Russia, but at her mother’s insistence, in 1946 they emigrated.

Another interview described in this book is the one of Carol Magulies. Thus, at the question when he resented for the first time the effects of deportation, Carol Magulies is answering: “As a consequence of the Ribbentrop – Molotov Pact, they occupied Bucovina. Bessarebia, and, also, Bucovina. The Russians came, but they had no business with the Jews. My father, being state functionary, should have found a refuge. But the troubles started from June, it seems to me from June 21, when the Germans and Romanians came. After a few days, we were deported. Why? Because, I had a neighbor, who was a German. She was staying near us, in a house with several owners, in a room, and needed a newer house. Immediately she went to the German Embassy, the German House, as it was called and arranged to evacuate us and to put her in our place. They give us two hours to leave the house: “You can take as much as you want, but only how much you can take. You can’t take away anything else”³¹. During the deportation, he stayed longer in the localities Atachi and Moghilev. Also his father was a former state employee and it was decided that state employees are not to be deported, lastly, the formerly evacuated ones, rested evacuated. An example of the experiences lived in the period of deportation is related in the fragment concerning the staying at Moghilev. “Every day they went to work. They were the gendarmes. At Moghilev, we stayed for two months, and in the morning we had to go to work to gendarmes. We were carrying goods in trains, we were taking away goods from the trains... In the morning we must have been there. We did not get absolutely anything – no food, no money, absolutely anything. In the evening we were going home. How did we survive? Our luck was that the Ukrainians were very poor. They had nothing. If they had a cow – the cow was shared during the forth seasons: summer to this one, autumn to that one, in winter to this one, in spring to that one. This is how it was (he laughs)”³². [transl.]

According to the decision from August 31, 1944, it was decided that “The rights of Romanians are the ones acknowledged by the Constitution of 1866 with the

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p.22.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p.27.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 28.

modifications that were later brought also by the Constitutions from March 29, 1923”³³. [transl.] Through the law no. 442, from September 1, 1944, there are closed the concentration camps where there were closed the Jews. Thus in the Article 1 of the Law it is mentioned: “On the basis of the present decree of law, there are dismantled from the whole territory of the country all the concentration camps, created by any legal or administrative disposition. All the imprisoned, will be put in liberty immediately, without any former formality. In the same time, it is suspended with immediate effect, all the administrative dispositions made at the setting of the obligatory domicile”³⁴. [transl.] In a document from December 19, 1944, there are annulled all the restrains to which were forced the Jews or their property: “By the handy project of decree- law, there are annulled all the restrains concerning the persons but also the Jewish goods, restrains that constituted, under the passed dictatorial regimes, the object of some legislative, administrative or judicial disposition. As a consequence of this decree – law, there are and remain dismantled all the discriminatory measures taken from racial reasons”³⁵. [transl.] In the same time, by the same project of law, there are given back the immobile and mobile goods of the Jews: “The immobile goods re-enters thus in the patrimony of the Jewish titular, free of any task that constitutes before de deprivation of the Jew, and the mobile goods will be recuperated by the deprived owner from the new owners. The re-entrance in the right to use of old Jewish owners and renters in the immobile properties from where they have been evacuated is immediate, by the effect of the present law. For a category of renters of the former National Centre of Romanization, introducing here a social criterion, we fixed the term of evacuation at April 23, 1945. Thus, the public servants and public pensioners, the workers, but also the small artisans with a monthly allowance smaller than 30 000 of lei, invalids, minors orphans and unmarried widows enjoys this delay, taking into consideration the possibilities of changing the domicile for all these categories in full winter”³⁶. [transl.] By this law of abrogation of anti – Jewish legislative measures are abrogated all discriminatory dispositions concerning the Jews.

Bulgaria nurtured the hope to recuperate the lost territories after the First World War: Southern Dobrogea that was ceased to Romania, Tracia that was ceded to Greece and Macedonia that was ceased to Serbia. The political regime installed in interwar period can be considered authoritarian, but not fascist³⁷. Southern Dobrogea (Cadrilaterul) was ceased by Romania to Bulgaria. Also in Bulgaria there were imposed anti- Jewish laws. Thus to the Jews there had been imposed restriction in the finding of a residence, concerning the right to propriety and also it had been restrained to them the right to practice certain professions. Bulgaria joined to the Axis from 1941. By a decree of law, it was stipulated that all inhabitants that were before

³³ Lya Benjamin, *Evreii din România între anii 1940- 1944*, vol.1. Legislația antievreiască, Editura Hasefer, București, 1993.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p.372.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 376.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p.377.

³⁷ Tzvetan Todorov, *The fragility of goodness. Why Bulgaria's Jews survived the Holocaust*, second edition, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001, p. 4.

were Yugoslavians and Greeks to receive Bulgarian citizenship, but not the Jews, with the exception of Jewish women married with non – Jews³⁸. At February, it was decided that the 20 000 of Jews to be deported³⁹. In 18 and 19 March, the Jews of Tracia were deported, and the ones from Macedonia were deported to Auschwitz. Totally, 11.343 of Jews were deported⁴⁰.

2. The situation of the Jewry from Soviet Union and its satellite countries between 1945- 1953

The ending of the Second World War and the consequences of the agreements from Teheran and Yalta brought the states from Central and Eastern Europe in the Soviet Union's influence area. The formal protests of the other allies, Great Britain and United States against the arbitrary and dictatorship imposed of Stalin, could not end the communization of this areal. The situation of this space which was affected by the Second World War, was especially complicated. Thus, due to the war, in Poland 6 millions of people died, in Yugoslavia 1.7 millions, in Romania more than 500 000⁴¹. In the same time, in this space several territorial modifications have taken place. The Polish state extended 150 of miles towards West on the expense of Eastern Germany as a reward for the lost territories of Poland in the favour of Soviet Union. The Soviets annexed Bessarabia and the north of Bucovina from Romania and Carpato – Rutenia from Czechoslovakia⁴². In these states communism knew a great expansion. In only a few years since the end of the war, the communists detained already the chains of power in the states found in Soviet Union's influence areal. From a small number of members, the communist parties increased their numbers to thousands of members. A lot of citizens became members of communist parties also from opportunism. Others hoped that being faithful to the new regime, they will obtain advantages. Also, in Romania, from 1000 of members of communist party in 1944, their number grew to hundreds of thousands communist members⁴³. It was considered that several members of Communist Party of Romania were Jews. The truth is that the number of communist Jews was high as a representation in the total of Jewish population, not as number of people, as Liviu Rotman shows us⁴⁴. The most Jews do not identified with the communist state. Until in 1989 around 400.000 of Romanian Jews emigrated in Israel.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p.9.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ Robin Okey, *Eastern Europe, 1740-1985: Feudalism to Communism*, London, Routledge, 1992, p. 191.

⁴² *Ibidem*, l.cit.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, l.cit.

⁴⁴ Liviu Rotman, *Evreii din România în perioada comunistă. 1944-1965 (The Jews from Romania in the communist period. 1944- 1965)*, Iași, Polirom, 2004.

At the end of the war, the Jewish communists from Eastern Europe were seriously affected. The Jews from the states as Romania (NV Transylvania), Hungary, Poland of Czechoslovakia were deported in German concentration camps. Once the war had finished, the survivors returned to a great extent home. Still some of them left for Western Europe, United States or Israel. This was the case of Elie Wiesel, a Jew of Transylvania, winner of Nobel Prize who stopped initially in France⁴⁵.

At the end of the war, the Jewish population lived in the conditions of poverty, fear and misery. They did not have food and sufficient shelters. The number of Jewish kids after the Holocaust was very small, being affected also by the lack of food and clothes. In Hungary, the number of Jewish children under 14 years old was only of 7. 712⁴⁶. The international Organisation Joint helped the communities of Jews from the communist states with food and medicines. For example, Joint spent more than 10 million dollars in Hungary in a single year. They were helped by the Joint over 200 000 of Jews in Romania, 120 000 in Hungary, 65 000 in Poland and 42 000 in Austria⁴⁷.

In the states from Central and Eastern Europe in which the communism was installed, the Jews were an important social basis for the recruitment of members and prominent leaders of communist parties. This reality was a consequence of the fact that the Jews had particular reasons to adhere to communism: "It is true, of course, that from a Jewish point of view, statistics that show that many of the communist leaders were of Jewish origin are irrelevant, since these leaders left the community or turned against it. However, from a sociological point of view, it is not irrelevant the assertion of Peter Kende <<people of Jewish origin...could easily identify with the new regime>>. This means that Jews or people of Jewish origin could easily identify themselves with the new regime>>. This means that the Jews, or people of Jewish origin who accepted communist ideals and entered the communist party or simply did not reject the communist regime may have had special motifs that Gentiles did not have".⁴⁸. These reasons could be explained by the consequences of the experiments the Jews had in history in Central and East European place. For instance, we know that in Russia, it had taken place pogroms. Or, in Romania's case, as Andrei Oișteanu shows in his book "The image of the Jews in the Romanian culture"⁴⁹, we are aware of the existence of anti- Semite conceptions in the popular literature and the cult one that were the expression of a state of fact. Analyzing the situation of Jewry after the more recent experiences so that it had been the Holocaust, which put the Jews in the situation to be exterminated as an ethnic group, it appears more easy to understand

⁴⁵ Elie Wiesel, *Toate fluviile curg în mare*(All the rivers flow into the sea), București, Editura Hasefer, 2000.

⁴⁶ Bernard Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora. The Jews in Europe since 1945*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd, Great Britain, London, 1996, p. 36.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸ András Kovacs, Jewish assimilation and Jewish politics in Modern Hungary, Yearbook of Jewish Studies Department of Central European University (Public Lectures, 1996- 1999), Internet: <http://web.ceu.hu/jewishstudies/yearbook01.htm>, accessed 1 May, 2015.

⁴⁹ Andrei Oișteanu, *Imaginea evreului în cultura română* (The image of the Jew in the Romanian culture), (ediția a II-a), București, Editura Humanitas, 2004, p. 9-425.

the aspiration of Jews towards security, their aspiration to put an end to this discriminations and the solution that ones of them find it appears as an alternative to their condition.

The problem of anti-Semitism was tried to be solved after the war. In the Western European space, in Federal Republic of Germany, at September 10, 1952 it was signed an agreement between the German state and the representatives of Jewry through which Western Germany engaged to the payment of substantial war reparations. In Austria, in a much smaller extent, in the years 1960 it was restituted approximately 5% of the total material losses suffered by the Jews. Anyway, the current was leading in the direction of pacification, of elimination of the anti-Semitism promoted in the Nazi epoch.

In an unexpected way, anti- Semite accents start to appear in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that proclaimed previously the solving of all social and national differences of any nature. A radiography of the situation of Jewry from the communist space during the years 1950 of the last century is revealed by Solomon Grayzel in the work *A history of contemporary Jews from 1900 to the present*: “Although the Soviet Union continued to be proud of the fact that anti – Semitism was declared illegally, proves that anti – Semitism still existed appeared. During the last years of the life of Stalin, he showed more and more intolerance towards the Jews and Jewish culture. The frequency with which appears the accusation of <<cosmopolitanism without roots>>, anything that these phrase could have meant against the people that had Jewish names, could not be accidental. In 1948 practically all Jewish writers were arrested and deported in Siberia. The so called <<doctor’s plot>> in 1952, according to which it was established that a lot of prestige doctors – most of them Jews- planned to adhere prominent leaders of Soviet Union, was opening the path of old fashioned anti- Semite campaign. The death of Stalin, in March 1953, the overshadowing of his personality and the execution of Lavrenti Beria put an end to the campaign against the Jews. Some of the deported writers came back from Siberian exile; here and there a few theaters in idis were allowed to exist. But a press in idis proud of this name existed no more, the schools with teaching in idis remained close”⁵⁰. Concerning the states existent behind the Iron Curtain, Solomon Grayzel asserted that these had not had the will to absorb the Jewish population and that the emigration in Israel would have been possible in all stages if it did not exist Russian opposition. The community life, in consequence, was preserved in this area⁵¹.

András Kovács in his work *Introduction: Special Issue on Eastern European Antisemitism* asserts that the victims of the Holocaust came mainly from Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and offers a new definition of anti-Semitism: “After Auschwitz, there seemed to be a moral consensus that there was no <<innocent>> anti-Semitism and not only legal and social discrimination of the Jews but the public expression of everyday stereotypes and prejudices become intolerable – not least

⁵⁰ Solomon Grayzel, *A history of the contemporary Jews from 1900 to the Present*, Atheneum, New York, 1977, p. 154.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 155.

because people had seen how quickly <<moderate>> anti-Semites could become participants in, or passive observers of the persecution of Jews”.⁵²

András Kovács and György Fisher, in the article *Anti-Semitism in Hungary after the Fall of Communism*, talks about the fact that in Hungarian subculture and marginal society from Hungary are to be found Anti-Semitic accents even in contemporary times. Thus, the authors state: “Anti-Semitism openly appeared in Hungary – as it did in most former East-bloc countries – after the fall of communist system. Some of its manifestations in this country differ in no way from manifestations of anti-Semitism in the Western world. Inarticulate forms of racism – including anti-Semitism- which function to aggressively compensate for social frustrations with prejudice are spreading among those threatened by the dangerous increase in unemployment and social marginalization- including skinheads and other youth groups from the subculture.”⁵³ The authors have their sociological research and according to their estimates, in contemporary times, in Hungary live between 80 000 and 100 000 of Jews, most of them in Budapest. Another aspect noticed by the authors is that Hungarian intellectuals think that the number of Jews living in Hungary is higher than these ones.⁵⁴ But the wrong estimate of Hungarian intellectuals is obvious even in what concerns the correct numbers of victims of Holocaust. Thus the authors conclude: “As can be seen from the table, 58% of respondents thought that fewer than ½ million Hungarian Jews were victims of war, and 29% estimated fewer than ¼ million, while in reality close to 600 000 were killed.”⁵⁵

Attila Pók⁵⁶ establishes a connection between the anti-Semitism and the role of scapegoats played pretty often by the Jews in East Central Europe over the last centuries, but also in contemporary times. Minorities can be excellent scapegoats, and among them Jews play a particular case. Starting with accusation of ritual murder placed for no reason on Jews on the past centuries, and ending with Holocaust, anti-Jews nuances of the Christian religious discourse, or with the accusation of paving the way for black market on ailments during post war years of economic crises, the

⁵² András Kovács, „Introduction: Special Issue on Eastern European Antisemitism” in *Journal for the study of Anti-Semitism*” volume 4, no. 2, 2012, <http://web.ceu.hu/jewishstudies> accessed in June 18, 2015, p. 357. The author acknowledges a new kind of anti-Semitism particular to communist governments in Central and Eastern Europe, see *op.cit.*, p. 357: „Despite their total control over Jewish institutions and Jewish Community life, the Communist parties of East Central Europe considered the conflictual historical memories about Jews as well as the Jewish presence in their societies to be disturbing factors”. Anti-Semitism is to be found also in contemporary Central Eastern Europe, shows the author.

⁵³ András Kovács and György Fisher, „Anti-Semitism among Hungarian University and College Students” in Randolph L. Braham and Attila Pók (eds.), *The Holocaust in Hungary. Fifty Years Later*, Columbia University Press, 1997.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, 685.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, 686.

⁵⁶ Attila Pók, „Scapegoating and Anti-Semitism after World War I: Hungarian Political Thought and action”, in CEU Jewish Studies Yearbook (2002-2003), <http://web.ceu.hu/jewishstudies> accessed in June 18, 2015, p. 218.

Jews were always considered as a particular ethnic and religious group regarded with suspicion by the majorities of East Central European States.

Raphael Patai shows that after the Revolution of 1956, the cases of emigration among the Jews from Hungary increased. Other Jews who did not want to emigrate in Israel choose the conversion to Christianity after the Second World War. But in comparison with Jewish trend from Central and Eastern Europe to emigrate in Israel, in Hungary Jewish emigration remained relatively low.⁵⁷ Right after the Holocaust, the Hungarian Jews did not emigrate in large extent, only between 1945- 1947 between a third and a quarter from Hungarian Jewry, emigrated 28000 in Israel, 28 000 in Western Europe and overseas, per total 56 000 Jewish emigrants abroad.⁵⁸ Like in Romania, also in Hungary, the Holocaust and the atrocities committed against the Jews during the war was in the center of public debates, all political parties debated the topic. But during the years 1948, shows Raphael Patai, the Hungarian government stopped the publication of books, studies, articles related to the Holocaust theme.⁵⁹ In the communist view, several peoples from Central and Eastern Europe suffered because of Fascism and not only the Jews.

Patai shows that when the Soviets entered Budapest, the surviving Jews regarded them like heroes, while the Hungarians as enemies⁶⁰. Jewish Community was saved from furnaces from Russian forces, while Hungarians were deprived of their property after the setting of communism. The Jewish survivors of Budapest turned to the newly created system, communism, being aware that it will abolish the ethnic cleavages and will put an end to ethnic discrimination and anti-Semitism.

The faces of Anti-Semitism continued to re-appear even after the end of Second World War. Thus, in May 1946, at Kúnmadaras it was spread the information that the Jews want to commit a “ritual murder”, a frequent unfounded accusation placed on Jews since ancient times. After the local pogrom takes place, two Jews were killed and 18 injured. At Miskolc, Mátyás Rákosi asked for the death of Jewish commercials who were acting on black market.⁶¹

The Jewish individual property was returned back only partially and with difficulty. Several non – Jews became owners of Jewish properties and did not want to return them back when the Jews returned from Holocaust. The communists considered the Jews, to a certain extent as owners of considerable fortunes in the past. As a consequence of this fact, they opposed to the return of Jewish property to former Jewish owners.

The Jews were also affected by the economic policies of the communist state. The ones who returned found their property devastated, their houses destroyed. They re-entered in the possession of their properties with difficulty, facing the opposition of nationals from these countries. It can not be talked about by an integral restitution

⁵⁷ Raphael Patai, *The Jews of Hungary. History, culture, psychology*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1996.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 613.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 615.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 624.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 628.

of Jewish property, the Jewish houses were robbed in fascist period, the actions and money lost their value. They were subjected to the same laws of nationalization as the nationals of the communist countries. As a consequence, the factories, shops, land was taken over by the newly created communist states. In Romania and Hungary the goods of the ones who did not returned from Holocaust who weren't the object of the process of nationalization continued to be administered by the Jewish Communities from these states.

Among the Jews who returned from Holocaust, a large part tried to contribute to the reconstruction of their countries, found under the "umbrella" of Soviet Union. It must be said, from the very beginning, that, initially, the Jews did not fear of communism, on the contrary they saw it as the single force capable to stop the Nazism. For them, the coming of Red Army was an act of deliverance; it put an end to the departure of death trains in the German concentration camps. Soon it became obvious that the communism was a system imposed by force, which sent to prison the elites of interwar world from the satellite states of Soviet Union. It became obvious that Stalin was a tyrant who made numerous victims. A part of the Jews, going on the path initiated at the end of the XIXth century by Theodor Herzl wanted the creation of their own state, Israel, in which they emigrated in large number when the conditions imposed by Soviet Union allowed it. Until 1948, Palestine was under British mandate and the British opposed to the emigration of Jews in *Palestina*. But these emigrations produced also illegally. A large part of the emigrants come from the communist states.

Although several Jews from the satellites countries of the Soviet Union emigrated in Israel during the communist period, a part of them chose to integrate in communist states, to become party members or even representatives of communist *Nomenklatura*. The orientation towards the communist ideas is old. It can not be contested the participation of the Jews to the Revolution of 1917 and their involvement in the first years of Russian communism. But, there are also explanations. During the governance of Russian tsars, the Jews were subjected to several discriminations: they were placed in a separated zone of residence, they were often considered as scapegoats for the mistakes of tsarists governments. Anti- Semite feelings there existed, expressed in modern epoch and at the beginning of XIXth century, by numerous pogroms whose victims were the Jews. During the war, Stalin tried to have a politics less anti-Semite towards the Jews from Soviet Union. He created, in this sense, a Jewish Anti- Fascist Committee. After the creation of the state of Israel, for a short time, he encouraged the Zionism⁶².

In comparison with the years of the war, we have to acknowledge that the communist system was more tolerant, offering the same advantages to the Jews as to the other citizens. Thus they could study at all levels in the national schools and universities, they could get a better workplace even of superior level, they had conditions of life and work better that in concentration or working camps. But, on the other hand, in the actions of social purification, of elimination of economic and cultural elites of interwar period, the communists hit also the Jewish industrials or bourgeoisie who were captured into prison and eliminated.

⁶² Paul Johnson, *A history of the Jews*, London, Phoenix Press, 2001.

In Soviet Union it started an “anti- cosmopolite” campaign in cultural plan whose leader was Jdanov. The Jews were considered as “cosmopolitans without roots”. The ones who were active in cultural field remained without means of living, others were eliminated from the sphere of science, art, press. The Jewish newspapers and the schools, theatres and the other Jewish institutions, a lot of synagogues were closed. In the same time, the Zionism is now condemned officially. The Jews were encouraged to remain in Soviet Union, not to emigrate in Israel. It was born the idea that the Jews are not a particular nation and there are related with other peoples with a common origin. The Soviets cooperated with the Arabians and did not sustain the emigration in Israel. This campaign against the Jews culminated in 1953 with “white gown affairs”, initiated by Stalin himself, a campaign against the Jewish doctors that they would contribute to the death of soviet leaders. This campaign was not something totally new, but the feelings of Stalin towards the Jews were all knew⁶³.

An important organism was Jewish Antifascist Committee whose role grew, in time⁶⁴. This committee had 70 of permanent members, a newspaper, a printing house. It played a double role, it had played the role of representative of the Jews in Occident and in front of Central Committee. In September 1946, it was dismantled being considered a Zionist and reactionary body. The dismemberment of Jewish Antifascist Committee produced in stages. Some of the important personalities of the committee, as Fefer si Zaskin, were arrested⁶⁵.

In the context of passing of the culture from Soviet Union under Russian influences, the Jewish intellectuals were excluded from the sphere of Russian culture: “From the denunciation of the <<cosmopolitans>> finally it was asserted Russian <<superiority>> in all fields of science, technique and culture” as a consequences stupid and visible glorification of Russian substratum”. The Jews were eliminated, as it shows Alexandr Soljenițin from the Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Science, from the Institute of Judicial Sciences⁶⁶. The cultural Jewish institutions were closed.

In August 12, 1952, 13 of the most important writers in idis language were killed from Stalin’s order. Thus they died Peretz Markish, Leib Kvitko, David Hofstein, Itzik Feffer and David Bergelson.

The anti-Semitism of Stalin started to appear mainly after 1948. On January 1948, the Jewish – Russian actor Solomon Mikhoels was killed. This event seems to

⁶³ George H. Hodos, *Stalinist Purges in Eastern Europe, 1948- 1954*, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1987, p. 86, describes the context in which the doctor’s plot from Soviet Union takes place: “..On March 5, 1953, there came the news of the death of Stalin. On April 4, the Jewish physicians arrested in connection with the alleged “doctors plot” were released from their Moscow prison cells. An article in Pravda denounced the anti-Semitic aspect the trial was to have had. An article in Pravda denounced the anti-Semitic aspect the trial was to have had. (...) The year 1953 ended in the Soviet Union with the execution of Beria and a number of his associates including the former state Security Minister Abakumov and General Byelkin, who stage- managed the show trials in Eastern Europe”.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 419.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 421.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 422.

be the beginning of the anti-Semite phase from the life of Stalin. The turn to anti-Zionism took longer time, but it became decisive in the autumn of 1948⁶⁷.

During the years 1952- 1953 a real nightmare came over the Soviet Jews. In his work *Anti-Semitism without Jews. Communist Eastern Europe* written by Paul Lendvai, it is shown the discriminatory character of the politics of Stalin towards the Jews in these years: "The insistence with which Soviet propaganda continues to tell its lies towards the Joint, Jewish finances and world Zionist conspiracy which were repudiated by the same regimes as <<fabrications>> force us to reassert the former assertions about the <<dark years>> of Soviet Jewry and about temporal or incidental character of anti-Semitism as a political weapon."⁶⁸

The Jews of Bulgaria were not deported with the exception of the ones from occupied Tracia. A good part of the Bulgarian Jews lost their propriety. They had bad life conditions also after the war.

In the study of Arie J. Kochavi, *British Diplomats and the Jews in Poland, Romania and Hungary during the communist takeovers*, it is showed that at the end of Second World War, with the exception of URSS, there still existed important communities of Jews also in other states of the Soviet Block as Romania, Poland and Hungary⁶⁹. The article of Kochavi describes the situation of the Jews from the third countries during the years 1945- 1947 reflected in the reports of some British diplomats, United Kingdom trying to stop a potential wave of emigration that came from these countries. In 1945, more than 100 000 of Jews had registered in Bucharest with the intention to emigrate in Palestine, these ones being encouraged also by the Red Cross⁷⁰. In Hungary, the Jews who returned from concentration camps found it impossible to re - organize their community and religious life. This aspect motivated the Zionists to try to emigrate in Palestine⁷¹. More Jews played important roles in Hungarian political life: Rákosi Mátyás, important leader of Communist Party, Gerő Ernő, minister of Transports, Révai József, a prestigious journalist, Vas Zoltán, mayor of Budapest⁷².

In Czechoslovakia, the communists tried to have the control on the country only after in 1948. Anti- Semitism manifested here less pregnant than in other countries. The Subcarpathian Ukraine was annexed by Soviet Union as a price of the liberation of the country. Being afraid of Soviet Anti- Semitism, a lot of Jews declared themselves Czechs and Slovaks. A part of Czechoslovakian Jews took a refuge in the American areal of occupation of Germany.

In Czechoslovakia according to a law, the fortunes without masters remained in the property of the state, and also a great extent from the Jewish property. In Czechoslovakia it took place the Slanski trial, the accused being mainly Jews.

⁶⁷ Johnson, *op.cit.*, p. 526.

⁶⁸ Paul Lendvai, *Anti- Semitism without Jews. Communist Eastern Europe*, Doubleday& Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1971, p. 17.

⁶⁹ Arie J. Kochavi, "British Diplomats and the Jews in Poland, Romania and Hungary during the Communist Takeovers", in *East European Quaterly*, vol.29, 1995.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*.

⁷² *Ibidem*.

Slanski Trial began in November 20 and ended in November 27, 1952. From 14 accused, 13 were Jews. The accused were forced to acknowledge that they were active as imperialist spies, police informers, trotkist traitors and agents of the titoist-bourgeois- nationalist plot⁷³. They were accused that they plotted to eliminate the leader of the state, Klement Gottwald. It existed also an anti – Semite side of the process. Thus Slanski was accused that he kept contacts with Granville, a representative of international Zionism⁷⁴. After the process, Slanski, Geminder, Frejka, Clementis, Reicin, Sva, Margolius, Fischl, Sling, Simone were sentenced to death and executed in December 5. The rest of the accused were sentenced to life prison.

Arieh Kochavi shows that the most difficult was the situation of the Jews from Poland, where in August 1945 there still had been living 50 000 of Jews⁷⁵. Initially the Polish government did not stop the Jews to go. About 300 of Jews were killed in Poland starting with the year 1945 as a result of anti – Semitism.

In Poland, the Anti-Semitism knew exaggerated forms, including pogroms. The anti – Jewish persecutions coming from the Polish population continued to manifest both in time of war, but also after the setting of the communism. A lot of Polish people were anti – Semites because of the fact that a big number of Jews was present in the ranks of Polish Communist Party. As a consequence, the victims of anti – Jewish persecutions after 1945 oscillated between 600 and 3000 of persons⁷⁶.

The Polish Anti- Semitism took even the form of pogroms whose victims were the Jews. These were the pogrom of Kielce and Przborze. Bozena Szaynok, in her

⁷³ George H. Hodos, *op.cit.*, p.83. About the past of communist Jewish nomenclature that was either sentenced to death either condemned to life prison wrote George H. Hodos: “The trial of the Leadership of the Anti-State Conspirational Centre led by Rudolf Slansky began on November 20 and concluded on November 27, 1952. Each of its fourteen defendants was a high – ranking communist. They had fought on the battlefields of Spain and in World War II, they had served in the French resistance or with the partisans in the forests of Slovakia, and they had survived the terrors of Nazi prisons and concentration camps. Tried by their own comrades, their entire lives, devoted to the ideals of the revolutionary movement, were turned and over end. In the Courtroom of the Pankrac prison. Before a carefully selected audience, one defendant after another confessed to having been, from the days of their youth on, imperialist spies, police informers, Trotskyst traitors, and agents of Titoist – bourgeois – nationalist plot to overthrow the communist government of Czechoslovakia and murder its head of state, Klement Gottwald.”. Titoism played a minor play in Slanski trial, but Anti-Semitism was a central theme of the process, see George Hodos, *op.cit.*, p.84: “Thus a connection was established between the old Trotskyst – Titoist enemy and the new one, the Jews. Anti-Semitism occupied a central place in the Slanski Trial; its manifestations appeared in every segment of the indictment (...) In the indictment, the Jewish descent of the defendants was constantly stressed : “The Trotskyst and Jewish – bourgeois nationalist Bedrich Geminder”, “André Simone, whose real name is Otto Katz, an international spy, Zionist and Trotskyste”; “Hanus Lomsky, originally called Gabriel Lieben”.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*. “Granville said that his main source of information was Slansky, the solid pillar of his spy net, the most intelligent Jew that he (Granville) ever knew”.

⁷⁵ Kochavi, *op.cit.*

⁷⁶ Bozena Szaynok, “The Role of Antisemitism in Postwar Polish – Jewish Relations” in vol. Robert Blobaum (ed), *Antisemitism and its opponents in Modern Poland*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2005, p. 265- 283.

study *The Role of Antisemitism in Postwar Polish – Jewish Relations* considers that the murder of the Jews became a usual fact⁷⁷.

In the same time, a reason to kill the Jews both during the war but also, after the war, was given by the will to capture or to maintain possession on Jewish properties and goods by the Polish ethnics. A debated idea in the states placed in the sphere of Soviet influence with regard to the Jews, including in Poland, it was that the Jews brought the communism. The Jews encountered the opposition of nationals whom, in majority, rejected the communism, seeing it as being imposed by outside by Soviet Union and its allies.

It can be asserted that also there were Jews who were victims of communism. This is because, before the war, they were, to great extent, the products of a social category, materially superior that had fallen into disgrace when communism was installed. There existed pretexts, justifications, most often fabricated, which the Polish people used in order to fabricate their anti- Semite actions. Such accusations were: the ritual murder, cases of punishment with the purpose to throw Jews away or to take their propriety, crimes after armed interventions, other attacks directed against the Jews. In 1946, a number of 125 000 of Jews arrived from Soviet Union. After some incidents which took place in Krakow, 5 Jews were killed. Starting with the year 1946, the number of Jews who emigrated in Palestine, continued to rise. During the Stalinist epoch, the Zionist parties were liquidated and dissolved. The Jews involved in the Security of Polish state.

During the years 1948- 1953, we remember a few anti-Semite manifestations. Thus in May 27, 1945 at Przborze, it took place a genuine pogrom. The need of Jews for security, in these circumstances was obvious. Danuta Blus- Wegrowska, in an article about the situation of Jews from Poland after 1945, defined the atmosphere which existed in these years as “pogromlike”⁷⁸, namely specific to pogrom. At Kielce, it took place, in the same time, a pogrom in which the events started with the accusations of ritual murder. The number probable of victims of this pogrom was 42⁷⁹.

The Polish intellectuality, after these pogroms, denounced anti-Semitism, but they represented only the voice of elites. The Polish community and the Jewish one knew a self distance. On the fond of the change of politics towards of Israel, the Polish state changed his attitude. The Jewish Community was subjected to the control of political forces and of Security. An Israeli Official was arrested in Warsaw, so as the former leader of Jewish Committee from Lower Silesia⁸⁰. The attitude of Poland remained as hostile to the Jews from Stalinist period.

Important is also the attitude of communists towards the Jews in Poland, which we can notice in the communist space. The study of Alix Langrebe, *Polish national identity and deformed memory from 1945 to the present: Mythologizing the Polish*

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁸ Danuta Blus- Wegrowska, “Atmosfera pogromowa”, Apud Bozena Szaynok, *op.cit.*, p.271.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p.272.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 281.

*Role in the Holocaust*⁸¹, describes the perception of Holocaust and of the Jews in the communist Polish society. Thus about Holocaust it can be debated only in silence, a very few books were written on this topic. The heroes of the Second World War were only the Poles, the minorities were not allowed to develop their own culture, the victims of Holocaust were Polish citizens in general and not the Jews (antifascist (Polish) citizens), Auschwitz became a symbol of anti- Fascist martyrdom. The author adds that in communist Poland, only the Jews assimilated by Polish culture and society had possibilities of affirmation.

In the communist parties of the member states of the communist camp, the Jews played an important role. In Poland we have Jews as prominent members of communist party such as Roman Zambrowski, Hilary Minc, Jakub Berman. In Romania, minister of External Affairs was Ana Pauker.

In the book of Jay Howard Geller, *Jews in Post- Holocaust Germany, 1945- 1953*⁸² it is described the situation of Jewry from Federal Republic of Germany and from Democrat Republic of Germany in the postwar epoch. Jewish leaders were trying to make known the sufferance of the Jews while the communists considered the Jews as equal with German nationals. In Eastern Germany the problem of war reparations was not imposed. In turn, in Western Germany after the Agreement of Luxembourg, it was decided the payment for reparations towards Israel. The communist policy was hostile to Israel. As other communist states, also in Eastern Germany were put under trial Jewish political leaders found in key positions in the top of the state.

3. Reflections of Jews and Holocaust in communist Romania

I would like to start on this issue with the study of Randolph Braham, *Romanian Nationalists and the Holocaust: The Drive to Refurbish the Past*⁸³. A well known historian involved in studying the history of Jews and of Holocaust, especially in Hungary, but also in Romania, Randolph Braham reveals in this study the mechanisms of the communist power under the leadership of president Nicolae Ceaușescu to distort the historical truth about the anti-Jewish policy of Romania during the years 1940- 1944, to minimize Jewish deprivation of rights in the post – Trianon Romania, the fact that they remained without means of living because they could not practice their jobs, to ignore certain deportations in Transnistria and their Jewish victims, and also to forget that it existed events such as the Pogrom of Iassy and Bucharest. The revolutions and changes of regime from 1989, in Hungary,

⁸¹ Alix Landgrebe, “Polish National Identity and deformed memory from 1945 to the present: Mythologizing the Polish Role in the Holocaust”, in RFE/RL *East European Perspectives*, 17 March 2004, volume 6, number 6.

⁸² Lynn Rapaport: „Jay Howard Keller, *Jews in Post- Holocaust Germany, 1945- 1953*”, in *German politics and society*, volume 23, issue 2, 2005, p. 110.

⁸³ Randolph Braham, *Romanian Nationalists and the Holocaust: The Drive to Refurbish the Past*, in CEU Yearbook (Public Lectures, 1996- 1999), <http://web.ceu.hu/jewishstudies>, accessed in April 22, 2015.

Romania and the Eastern block made possible the existence of public debates having as purpose to rightly reflect on the history of determinant events of the XXth century, such as Holocaust. Thus it aroused new notions such as the facts that in the countries allied or occupied with the Axis power not only Germans persecuted the Jews but also the native population who deprived them of rights, property, professions, leaving them pray to ghettoization, where most of them died. Also other inner forces, excepting the German contribution, appear thus as guilty for anti-Jews measures taken by the state or local power. Authors in the history of Holocaust talk about the several cases when non- Jews civilian population occupied Jewish residences post – deportation and used Jewish assets. Also the existence in labor camps of so called *kapo(s)*, people hired to terrorize the Jews having other nationalities than German. The Journal of Eva Heyman, a Jewish girl from Oradea, the niece of a Jewish pharmacist⁸⁴, is about the interwar period Oradea, about the final year 1944, about the last months and days before deportation. Public indifference, public robbery of Jewish assets and houses, the pressure put on Jews to go to ghetto and to leave their property at the disposal of local neighbors, public hate directed on Jews and their families, public violence make us wonder how these behaviors and intolerance could have been once possible in the provincial peaceful town of Oradea.

Right after the Holocaust, after the liberation of Jewish prisoners from the concentration camps, Jewish interests to regain their old positions and the wish to make justice for their fellows who suffered in the time of Holocaust was high⁸⁵. There were two ways to regain the status quo: to adjust to the communist system arising on the horizon (on the way to be implemented) or to try to emigrate in Israel, Holy lands and thus to embrace Zionism. All in all, the Jewish survivors tried in their time of waiting for emigration to get involved in the political life, to reconstitute the former Jewish Community, to create their own organization and networks of survival (schools, hospitals, synagogues, cantines, orphanates). But this state of independence took place only 2-3 years, because the rapid communization of society, with the obvious advance of communist, meant the communization of Jewish sector in the Romanian society and its close supervision and control. Soon, the communist activists from each Jewish organization took the leadership of the organization in order to subordinate it to communist ideals. In 1953, there was still remaining only one Jewish Organization of the Jewish Spectrum, and this was Jewish Democratic Committee.

⁸⁴ Eva Heyman, *J'ai vécu si peu. Journal du ghetto d'Oradea (Préface de Carol Iancu, traduit du Hongrois par Jean – Léon Muller)*, Editions des Syrtes, 2013.

⁸⁵ In Romania and Hungary, after the end of Second World War, one could have noticed an effervescence in the written press and in the public sphere with regard to Holocaust. Victims wanted to make public their sufferance, many books and memories were published. These were the years 1945- 1948. In the work of István Deák, "Jews and Communism: The Hungarian Case" in ed. Jonathan Frankel, *Dark times, dire decisions. Jews and communism, Studies in contemporary Jewry An Annual XX*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2004, p. 47, it is mentioned the sociologist István Bibó as one of the first writers who pictured the Holocaust and war years anti- Semitism with objectivity. In Stalinist years nothing was said about the link Jews- communists, says Deak, while, after 1989, a new generation of historians emerged in Hungary, such as "György Borsányi, Robert Győri Szabó, Viktor Karády, László Karsai, András Kovács, János Pelle, Miklós Szabó and Krisztian Ungváry." (p.48)

It is superficial to think that the Jews who adhered to communism and turned in genuine communist leaders and activists forgot the common sufferance of the Jews and interwar period persecution. Jewish Community in turn had to solve the dilemma by keeping out the former communists, by denying their affiliation to Jewish people, by putting to carry alone the burden of their belonging to communism. On the contrary, not few were the Jews who having important roles in communist Nomenklatura helped their fellows to emigrate in Israel. This was also the case of Marcel Pauker, the brother of the woman Jewish activist and leader Ana Pauker, she being also Minister of Foreign Affairs of the communist Romania after 1948. Ana Pauker as minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania was closely informed by the process of emigration of Romanian Jewry to Israel.

Randolph Braham in the article *Romanian Nationalists and the Holocaust: The Drive to Refurbish the Past*, talks about how it was mystified the historical truth about Holocaust a few decades later, during Ceușescu mandate in Romania when Marshall Antonescu was transformed from a war criminal into a hero, figures relating to Holocaust were mystified, and the atrocities against the Jews on the former Greater Romania Territory were caused only by Horthyste and Nazi occupations. Thus, Randolph Braham asserts: “The wartime tragedy of Romanian Jewry reemerged as a public topic in the mid-1970s, presumably in response to a political decision by Ceaușescu’s regime to clean up the historical wartime record of Romania. The decision was apparently designed to further both domestic and foreign political objectives. Domestically, it aimed to bring about, among other things, the gradual rehabilitation of Antonescu and the purification of the country’s wartime historical record. In the foreign political sphere, it was designed to improve the country’s image abroad by contrasting Romania’s wartime self- proclaimed “humanitarian” record on the Jews with the “barbarism” of the Germans and, above all, the Hungarians- the Romanians’ traditional enemy”⁸⁶. Randolph Braham depicts step by step the characteristics of the new historiography with the view to the Jews, the ideas debated and accepted, revealing thus the lye of state propaganda. Thus the new historiography does not mention the anti – Jewish laws that existed in Romania during the years 1937- 1944; ignores the fact that Romania was an ally of the Axis and emphasize the war contribution of Romania against Fascism after August 23, 1944; does not recognize the role played by King Mihai, including in the realization of the Act of 23 August 1944 when Romania ceased the war against Soviet Union and joined the Allies camp and also this communist propaganda makes from Marshall Antonescu not a friend of the Fascists but a benefactor and savior of the Jews, a complete propaganda about his role and activity; this communist propaganda denies that in Moldovia, Bukovina, Bessarabia and Transnistria 270, 000 of Romanian and Ukrainian Jews were murdered⁸⁷; this communist approach puts in contradiction Romania’s human behavior in contrast with Hungary’s genocide, a partial truth only; justifies the Jewish victims from Bukovina and Bessarabia on the ground that there

⁸⁶ Randolph Braham, *op.cit.*, p.2.

⁸⁷The figures are offered by Randolph Braham, *Romanian Nationalists and the Holocaust: The Drive to Refurbish the Past*, p.3.

were close collaborators of the Communists, which was not always true⁸⁸. Randolph Braham analyzes how it is perceived the image of Ion Antonescu, the leader of Romania who had a military mandate during the years 1940- 1944, in this distorting historiography. Thus the marshal is not seen responsible for the genocide of Jews in Bessarabia and Bukovina, and does not take any blame for the condition of Jews in the wartime Old Kingdom of Romania. On the contrary, Antonescu is seen as a military, who, let the Jewish people from Romania to emigrate when the reality of figures shows that the overwhelming part of Jewry did not emigrate from Romania. The opinion that the Holocaust in Romania was anti- Romanian and not particularly anti- Semitic was an opinion spread by communist Romanian historians.

For comparison, the author Bozena Szaynok, in her study *The Role of Antisemitism in Postwar Polish – Jewish Relations*, shows that in Poland anti- Semite attitudes of Poles against the Jews continued to manifest also after the war and instauration of communism. A particular aspect in Poland it is the fact that here there took place pogroms and Jewish manifestations even after 1945, thus the number of Jews that, after the war, were victims of Poles- Jews confrontation was from 600 to 3000 persons⁸⁹. The author Bozena Szaynok defines that, after the war, Polish- Jewish relations were characterized by indifference, recognizing that there were Poles who helped the Jews, but also Poles who persecuted them: “Besides the socially dominant attitude of indifference, there existed two others that ran in opposite directions: namely, heroic attempts at rescue and active participation in the crime. Evidence of the former may be found in the number of Poles recognized with medals of Yad Vashem (the Holocaust memorial organization established in Jerusalem in 1953) as “Righteous among Nations”; the latter, linked undoubtedly to the phenomenon known as “fatal contamination” of the wartime generation, would continue to make itself after the war”⁹⁰.

Alix Landgrebe in his study *Polish National Identity and deformed memory from 1945 to the present: Mythologizing the Polish Role in the Holocaust*⁹¹

⁸⁸ The directions of Romania’s historiography during the years 1970 with the view to Second World War and Holocaust, are mentioned by Randolph Braham in his work, *Romanian Nationalists and the Holocaust*

⁸⁹ Bozena Szaynok, “The Role of Antisemitism in Postwar Polish – Jewish Relations” in Robert Blobaum (ed.), *Antisemitism and its opponents in modern Poland*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2005, p. 266.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 267.

⁹¹ Alix Landgrebe, *Polish national identity and deformed memory from 1945 to the present: Mythologizing the Polish Role in the Holocaust*, RFE/RL East European Perspectives, 17 March 2004, volume 6, Number 6. We quote here most relevant paragraphs relating to the perception of Jews and Holocaust in Polish communist historiography: “The Polish national ideology that developed after World War II has also been built on myths, including myths about the relations of Jews to the rest of Polish society. As already mentioned, in communist times, nationalist ideology was quite strong, no matter how paradoxical this might seem in light of, and in juxtaposition with, the familiar socialist propaganda of international solidarity.

In the communist period, some people would discuss the crimes they witnessed during the war, but only in private. Very few books dealing with the Holocaust were published; or if they were, they depicted the role played by Poles during the Nazi occupation in a positive light (Bartoszewski, 1969). In the People’s Republic of Poland, themes related to the Shoah- and especially Polish collaboration- were taboo. There

underlines the same characteristics of the communist Polish historiography related to Second World War and Jews as the Romanian historiography. Communist Polish Historiography was referring to the history of Polish People, not of national minorities, the theme of Holocaust was avoided, Holocaust was considered as being against the “antifascist [Polish] citizens”, not against the Polish Jews. Auschwitz was perceived as a symbol of Polish Martyrdom, not Jewish martyrdom and the adversary of Nazis were all communists. Speaking about Eastern state communist model where the “state organized forgetting” with the view to Holocaust was an encountered attitude, the author Michael Shafir points out that in states like Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania the fascism was seen as persecuting all communist population, not the particular group of Jews, minimizing thus the Jewish sufferance during the Second World War. Thus several nationalities died at Auschwitz according to communist historiography, not only the Jews⁹².

The volume *Raport Final*⁹³ (*Final Report*) elaborated by the International Commission for the study of Holocaust in Romania reflects on the topic of *Distorsion, negation and minimalization of Holocaust in postwar Romania*. This commission contains an important number of historians in the field of Holocaust studies such as Ioan Scurtu, Jean Ancel, Randolph Braham, Andrei Pippidi, Liviu Rotman, Leon Volovici, Lya Benjamin, etc, who brought their contribution at the elucidation of Holocaust enigma on Romanian territory. At May 26, 1946, it took place the process of war criminals in Bucharest who condemned marshal Antonescu for his anti-Jewish policy. Ioan and Mihai Antonescu were executed after the end of the trial. The justice was provided by two war Tribunals, in Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca. From 2700 of cases brought in front of the instances, only 668 were receiving condemnations⁹⁴. The authors points out that there were persons who were condemned for life prisons by these courts, who were later liberated and the consequence will be that many guilty persons later rehabilitated will join the ranks of communist party later.⁹⁵In parallel with the continuous communization of the country, the authorities were looking to eliminate the fascist reminiscences, to de-

was a perverted understanding of the idea of “citoyennete”, i.e. the political nation. This meant that the ideal of equal citizenship was grasped and presented so as to leave no place for minorities or differences of culture. A deformed notion of equity in a so- called equal society left no room for diversity. The fact that Jews were murdered received little or no mention, and official doctrine taught that most victims of the Holocaust were <<antifascist [Polish] citizens>>. This perception can be found in the works of several scholars, and was even illustrated in the exhibits displayed at the communist – erected Auschwitz memorial. Some Polish scholars (see Mach, 1995, p. 10) would eventually criticize these distorsions, and Western (particularly Jewish) scholars clearly distanced themselves from them (Steinlauf, 1997). The memory of the Shoah in general was deformed by communist propaganda, in which Auschwitz became a symbol of antifascist martyrdom. After the war, postcards of the Auschwitz crematoria were being sold, but only as a symbol of general Polish suffering”.

⁹² Michael Shafir, *Între negare și trivializare prin comparație. Negarea Holocaustului în țările postcomuniste din Europa Centrală și de Est (Between negation and trivialization by comparisson. The denial of Holocaust in postcommunist countries from Central and Eastern Europe)*, Polirom, 2002, p. 23-25.

⁹³ Tuvia Friling, Radu Ioanid, Mihail E. Ionescu (eds.), *Raport Final (Final Report)*, Polirom, 2005.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 319.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 321.

Nazify the Romanian state. This de-fascisation happened in the opinion of the authors very slowly. On the basis of Antonescu's trial stayed also the Law no. 312 from April 12, 1945, for the identification and punishment of the ones guilty of crimes of war⁹⁶. The process of Ion Antonescu enrolled in the line of processes having as purpose the de-fascisation of the countries which collaborated with Germany in the Second World War. The trial revealed also the dimension of the pogrom of Iassy when there were recorded 10 000 of Jewish victims killed or injured with the collaboration of local authorities⁹⁷. Ion Antonescu, acknowledged, during the trial the deportations in Transnistria of a number between 150.000 and 170.000 of Jews⁹⁸. Ion Antonescu motivated that he deported the Jews in order to save them from the local population. The state leadership of Ion Antonescu was considered as fascist during the trial against Fascism. The trial revealed the implication of Ion Antonescu in the massacres of Odessa, Iassy, Bucovina⁹⁹.

⁹⁶ We translate here the text of the law no 312 from April 12, 1945 that punished collaboration with fascism and crimes of war, as it was provided by the International Commission for the study of Holocaust, in *Raport final (Final report)*, p.323: "1. guilty of country's disaster were the ones who a). "promoted hitlerism or fascism and whom, having the political effective responsibility allowed the arrival of German army on the territory of the country; and b). after September 6, 1940 militated for the coming or happening of above mentioned facts by speaking, writing and all the other means"; 2. guilty of crimes of war; there has been established 15 different categories, among whom we remember: a) "they decided the declaration or the continuation of war against of Soviet Union and of United Nations"; c). they subjected to an inhuman treatment the prisoners and the hostages of war; d). they ordered or they accomplished acts of terror, of cruelty or of suppression of the population from the territories in which the war on carried on; e). They ordered or they accomplished collective repressions or individual with the purpose of political persecution or from Racial motifs on the civil population; they ordered or they exercised excessive works or displacements and transports of persons with the view of their extermination. g). the commandants, directors, supervisors and gate-mans, of camps of prisoners or political prisoners, of deportees or of political dissidents, of camps or detachments of obligatory work, which subjected to inhuman treatments the ones found under their authority; h). officers of judicial police or the authorities of inquiry with any title in questions with political or racial character who committed acts of violence, tortures or other illegal means to constrain; i). the prosecutors and civilian or military judges which helped or did, with intention acts of terror and violence; j). the ones who left the national territory in order to fight in the benefit of Hitlerism or fascism and attacked the country in writing, by word or in any other way". Also in the category of guilty of crime entered the persons who achieved illegal fortunes as a consequence of war or of racial legislation, the ones who emitted the legislation of hitlerist, legionnaire or racial conception or they applied in an excessive way this legislation". [transl.]

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 327.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 327.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 329-330. Only the opening of Soviet Archives made clearly for everybody the dimension of the crimes against the Jews: "Recently discovered crimes include: the shooting and burning of more than 70 000 of Jews in the concentration camps near the Bug; the massacrations, born and deportation of more than 80 000 of Jews of Odessa (from a larger area that included Odessa (from a larger area that included Odessa and in which the total number could be of appoximatively 80 000 of people); the participation of medical teams to these crimes; and the degree of implication and complicity of the High Commandment of Romanian army in the commition of these atrocities".

Lya Benjamin in the article *Marshall Antonescu's Conception regarding the "Jewish Question" Solution in Romania*¹⁰⁰ analyzing the state of art in the field of the history of the Second World War and Holocaust, concludes: "According to some authors, the Marshall impregnated to his regime an Anti- Semitism with <<an incontestable human face>>; in other's vision, Antonescu protected <<de facto the Romanian Jews>> against the systematic extermination by – final solution- sharing the occidental standards concerning human and civil fundamental rights."¹⁰¹ [transl.] The conclusion of Lya Benjamin, after analyzing a considerable historical literature concerning the Holocaust, is that Antonescu was an anti-Semite dictator and the concentration camps from Transnistria was the Romanian aspect of the Final Solution: "In conclusion, anti-Semitism, with a transformation in the Romanian context, reached the most higher quotas of destruction by the Anti- Jewish policy promoted by marshal Antonescu. And even if "local solution" was "non final", still, it had been integrated in the epoch of Holocaust".¹⁰² [transl.]

Without minimizing the Romanian chapter of Holocaust, but coming with a different interpretation, László Karsai in his study *Could the Jews of Hungary have survived the Holocaust? New answers to an Old Question* suggest that if it would have followed the example of Romanian cooperation with Germany, in Hungary, also, the number of the victims of Holocaust had been considerably reduced: "The leader of Romania, Marshall Ion Antonescu, following the examples of Mussolini and his generals, Marshall Pétain and, not the least, Miklós Horthy, refused to allow the deportation Romanian Jews in October 1942. The Marshall's decision surprised Berlin. Until October 1942, Romania had been in the frontline champion of the struggle for a Jew- free Europe. The estimated number of Romanian Holocaust is 270 000 – 280 000."¹⁰³ In the opinion of the author, Hungary should have found the same way as Romania to deal with Germany in the period of Holocaust: "The Hungarian Jews could have survived the Holocaust if the Hungarian government had acted as the Romanian government did. Unhesitating, displaying enthusiasm, it should have put as many troops, as much raw material and food at the disposal of German military as was demanded and, then, at the appropriate movement, depending on the military situation, switched to the side of Soviets".¹⁰⁴

In the chapter *Distortion, negation and minimization of Holocaust in postwar Romania* from *Final Report*, in order to define the Holocaust, the authors use terms such as "statal – organized participation of Romania to genocide", "Romania as ally and collaborator with the Nazi Germany", "the implementation by Romania of a systemic plan to persecute and to annihilate the Jewish population on the territories found under the authority of Romanian state". In front of the negative realities of Holocaust, the reaction of post – war contemporaries to these atrocities were focusing

¹⁰⁰ Lya Benjamin, „Marshall Antonescu's Conception regarding the „Jewish Question" Solution in Romania” in *Studia et Acta Historiae Iudaeorum Romaniae*, Editura Hasefer, București, 2000, pp. 325-336.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, p. 325.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, p. 336.

¹⁰³ László Karsai, „Could be the Jews of Hungary have survived the Holocaust? New answers to an Old Question”, Yearbook (2004- 2005), <http://web.ceu.hu/jewishstudies> , accessed in June 18, 2015, p. 65.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 78.

around the terms distortion of Holocaust, negation of Holocaust and trivialization by comparison of Holocaust¹⁰⁵.

Concerning the first utilized term, “distortion”, the authors of the present compendium defines it as “the operation to modify of the data of historical realities having in mind political and propagandistic aims”¹⁰⁶. Usually the word distortion of Holocaust has its origins in communist period when history was under communist censorship.

Negation of Holocaust is another term used in the author’s of *Final Report*’s analysis. The authors define the term of negation of Holocaust as “a try to deny the existence of Holocaust and/or negation of participation to genocide of large segments of its own nation”¹⁰⁷. The authors define three categories of negation: integral negation, deflective negation, selective negation¹⁰⁸. Integral negation is, in the opinion of the authors, as a try to deny the existence of Holocaust. In the view of integral negation, Holocaust is an occidental invention. Deflective negation admits the existence of Holocaust, but considers responsible only the Germans for it. The selective negation is seen, in the view of the authors of *Final Report*, as a combination of integral negation and deflective negation. The selective negation, thus, “denies the Holocaust – but his negation is applied only in the case of its own country. With other words, the selective negation admits the existence of Holocaust in other places, but it denies the participation of its own nation to its implementation”¹⁰⁹.

Chapter II of the book *Between negation and trivialization by comparison. The denial of the Holocaust in postcommunist countries from Central and Eastern Europe* written by Michael Shafir, is consecrated to *integral negation*. The author gives the example of Stanislav Pánis and Corneliu Vadim Tudor, both politicians. Pánis, Slovakian politician, denied the existence of Holocaust, motivating in an interview to Norwegian television that German Army did not have the capacity to exterminate 6 millions of Jews in concentration camps and Auschwitz is a Jewish affaire in order that the Jews to get money from Germans¹¹⁰. The same dilemma has the leader of Greater Romania Party, Corneliu Vadim Tudor basing his opinions on the research of English and American scientists contesting the Holocaust on the same ground that the

¹⁰⁵ Michael Shafir in his Foreword to his book, *Între negare și trivializare prin comparație. Negarea Holocaustului în țările postcomuniste din Europa Centrală și de Est (Between negation and trivialisation by comparison. The denial of Holocaust in post – communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe)*, Polirom, 2002, p. 13. asserts that the phenomenon of denial of Holocaust in the countries from Central and Eastern Europe is very frequent and, in consequence, Romania is not an exception from the case. This denial of Holocaust is in the opinion of Shafir a component of the “transition process”, period that followed after 1989 in former communist countries from Central and Eastern European counties (p. 14), when Romania became practically a country where “the anti-Semitism without Jews” was perpetuated, as a consequence of Romanian Jews exodus in Israel or other countries of the free world.

¹⁰⁶ Radu Ioanid, Mihail E. Ionescu, *op.cit.*, p.339.

¹⁰⁷ *Final report*, p.340.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, p.340- 341.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, p.341.

¹¹⁰ Michael Shafir, *op.cit.*, p.35.

German army could not physically eliminate 6 millions of Jews¹¹¹. The author shows that extremist examples of integral negation of Holocaust existed in countries such as Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and focuses then on Romania's case¹¹².

In what concerns "deflective negation", Michael Shafir tries to define it: "While integral negation is rarely encountered and stays, in general, marginal, the deflective negation is more encountered. The integral negation rejects the very existence of Holocaust while its deflective option does not do it; or, moreover, makes it only to a certain extent and in a perverse manner."¹¹³ [transl.] The author continues defining deflective negation asserting that "Deflective negation does not deny the Holocaust as a fact, but it transfers the culpability on the members of other nations or minimize the participation of members of their own nation, reducing it to "aberrant" manifestation whose influence would be insignificant"¹¹⁴. [transl.] There are many types of deflective negation. One first manifestation is to put the blame of Holocaust on German army, another type of deflective negation is to resume the fault for Holocaust for some insignificant categories of its own nation. Another possibility is to blame the Jews for Holocaust.¹¹⁵ The author Michael Shafir reveals many cases where public authorities and leaders denied their country's culpability for Holocaust or other massacres, blaming only the German authorities although a minority. The most important case is, in my opinion, revealed by Jan T. Gross in his book "Neighbors", where he describes the case of the massacres of Jedwabne where Polish ethnics burned in a wooden building 1600 of Jews. Nowadays it is considered that German army committed the massacre, while the historian Jan T. Gross demonstrates with arguments that the Poles ethnics killed the Jews.

But not all the Romanians persecuted and terrorized the Jews during the Second World War. There was a misconception about the Jews during the war, namely that they are allied with the Soviets and partisans of communism that turned them into enemies of Romanian people. There are also a category of Romanians who saved the Jews from certain death and were called in consequence "Rights among the Peoples". Such cases of saviors were identified in Bucharest and Iassy, but also in Bessarabia and Bucovina, on war territory. Our study (*Final Report*) shows that 11 persons or their descendants from Republic of Moldova received the title of "Rights among the Nations"¹¹⁶.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 35-36.

¹¹² Michael Shafir, *op.cit.*, p.41 focuses on the integral negation of Holocaust in Romania underlying the next paradox: „In Romania, the negationist articles seen the light of the day both in publications of radical continuity; but also in radical publications and- what it is more surprising – the spread of negationist literature was defended by some intellectuals perceived in general as having democratic positions and pro-occidental”. [transl.] In other words, many outstanding authorities did not have proper interpretations on Holocaust. President Emil Constantinescu was amongst the first Romanians who acknowledge the Romanian state's fault for Romanian chapter of Holocaust.

¹¹³ Michael Shafir, *op.cit.*, p.49.

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p.50.

¹¹⁶ Radu Ioanid, Mihail E. Ionescu, *op.cit.*, p. 293.

In his publications¹¹⁷ concerning the fate of Jews from North-West of Transylvania under Hungarian occupation during the years 1940 – 1944, Antonio Faur tries to defend the idea that although the faith of Jews from NW of Transylvania was tragic, their majority being deported to concentration camps from Germany and Poland, it always existed a benevolent category of Romanians who was protecting the Jews from Transylvania and helped a few of them to escape in Romania where the regime was not leading towards their annihilation. Sometimes, even the authorities were involved in giving the Jews from here a helping hand to escape, and this is the story of the Romanian consul to Oradea, Mihai Marina, who got involved in these evadations, convincing also members of the Consulate to help the Jews to escape, becoming thus a hero in the history of the brave Romanians who shared tolerance and support for the Jewish community, saving thus Humanity by their actions. Another idea accredited by the author, is that, for the Jews escaped from Hungarian occupation, Romania was a genuine oasis where their lifes were not threatened and their survival was possible until the end of the war. And this reality, underlined by the author, happend in spite of the fact that Romania was fighting in the war on the side of Germans, in East, against the Soviet Union. So if the reality draft by the author proves to be true, although also in Romania it existed an anti – Jewish legislation during the years 1940-1944, the situation was still bearable for the Jewish minority.

The author Antonio Faur tries to convince his readers about the truth of his story, namely that Romanian ethnics helped the NW Transilvanian Jews to escape in Romania and, in this sense, quotes other works which acknowledge this idea. Thus he quotes the work *Final Report*, a genuine collective work that analyses the Romanian attitudes and policies towards the Jews during the Holocaust, a work that urges for the idea that these “actions of salvation” made by Romanian ethnics be researched further. Also, Antonio Faur quotes the words of the well known Nobel Prize winner of Jewish origin coming from Transylvania, Elie Wiesel, who shows his gratitude for these brave Romanians who, by their actions, saved a number of Jews from certain death. Last but not least, Antonio Faur quotes Randolph Braham, a well known historian specialized in the *History of the Jews* and in the *Holocaust*, who refers to Romania as to “an oasis” where the Jews from North-West of Transylvania tried to escape encountering, thus, the opposition of Hungarian authorities.

In order to establish the merit of the Romanian diplomats in the actions of salvation of Romanian Jews from Oradea¹¹⁸, the author Antonio Faur provides the name of the employees of the General Consulate of Romania in Oradea that were: Anghel Lupescu (vice-consul), Ion Isaiu (law expert and vice-consul), Ion Romaşcanu (vice-consul and officer in diplomatic field), Mihai Bologa (vice-consul), Alexandru Olteanu (vice-consul), Vasile Hossu (vice-consul), Rupert Gamber (secretary), Geta Cănciulescu (secretary), Tinuca Sabău (secretary), Steinkolar

¹¹⁷ The publication of Antonio Faur we quote here is *Implicarea diplomatului român dr. Mihai Marina în acţiunile de salvare a evreilor din Transilvania de Nord şi Ungaria (1944)* (*The implication of the Romanian diplomate dr. Mihai Marina in the actions of salvation of the Jews from Northern Transylvania and Hungary (1944)*), Oradea, Editura Muzeului Țării Crișurilor, 2014.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

(secretary), Mihai Hotea (administrator) and Mihai Mihai (administrator). The author Antonio Faur urges that these secret operations of crossing the border the Jews from Oradea to Romania, have to be known in detail in order to constitute a genuine evidence data base. As a prove that the General Consulat from Oradea had good relations with the Jews from Oradea before ghettoization and deportation, stands the fact that many members of the Legation were, in fact, rentners of the Jewish families from the city.

Seeing the communism in perspective and, as a counter force to fascism, the general consul Mihai Marina PhD had a good relationship with the taler Ludovic Schwartz, one of the leaders of communist movement from Oradea. He even offered to support him to pass the boundary in Romania, but, because of his communist mission, Ludovic Schwartz refused the proposal.

Antonio Faur writes about how these illegal crossing of borders took place. Thus there were used three cars: of the council's, of vice- consuls' Anghel Lupescu and Ion Romaşcanu. The Jews were transported with these cars to secure places where they were expected by persons of confidence and they were crossed the borders.

Not of all of the authors believe the idea that Romanian people was a natural friend of the Jews, trying to rescue them from Nazi and Hungarian extermination. Antonio Faur gives the example of Zoltán Tibori Szabó, a Hungarian publicist from Cluj-Napoca, that asserts that the contribution of Romanian peasants and intellectuals at saving from death certain Jews is a doubtful fact that was not confirmed by any another sources. Antonio Faur brings proves his point of view based on historical evidence in order to demonstrate the benevolent character of certain Romanians.

Michael Shafir talks also by the selective negation of Holocaust which is defined as a "hybrid between integral negation and deflective negation"¹¹⁹ [transl.], admitting the existence of Holocaust in other places of Europe but not in Romania or committed by Romanians. This kind of selective negation seems to be quite encountered in Romania. Selective negation adherents' states that the policy of Ion Antonescu was not against the Jews and the fact that he did not committed any crime against the Jews, but also, in their opinion, the iron guards were innocents and not anti- Semite. Professor Buzatu specialized in contemporary history of Romania and professor Ion Coja of Romanian linguistics are, in the opinion of Shafir, the few selective negationists in Romania. For instance, in the opinion of Buzatu, in Romania, Holocaust did not exist, the only exception being Northern Transylvania which was in 1940-1944 under Hungarian occupation. Coja do not acknowledge that iron guards were anti- Semites and absolves them of any responsibility for the Pogrom of Bucharest (January 1941) and assassination of the historian Nicolae Iorga¹²⁰.

Last but not least, another post – Holocaust encountered attitude, perpetuated in communist times, underlined by professor Michael Shafir is trivialization by comparison. This is seen as "an intentioned distortion of history and of its meanings, by <<humanizing>> local history in comparison with the atrocities committed by the Nazis or by comparing the Holocaust with the mass sufferings to which there were

¹¹⁹ Michael Shafir, *op.cit.*, p.89.

¹²⁰ Apud M. Shafir, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

subjected large masses of the population or – humanity in general, along the history”.¹²¹ [transl.] History continued to be distorted until in 1998 when the newly elected president of the country, Emil Constantinescu lectured on the common guilt of Romanians and Romanian authorities for Holocaust: “(...) The innocents death can not be nor forgiven, nor changed, nor forgotten [...] It is my duty, in my quality of President of Romania, of all Romanian citizens, to be the guarantor of this memory, no matter of how painful it could be; it is my duty to keep alive the memory of the Romanian Jews who felt victims of genocide.”¹²² [trans.]

In his article, *The roots of Romanian negationism. The Ion Antonescu's Trial*¹²³, Michael Shafir talks about trivialization by comparison in post – communist Eastern and Central Europe when Holocaust and Gulag are compared according to a *symmetrical approach*, as two faces of the same coin. In relation with the Holocaust, the author identifies a deflective negation and a selective negation, on the other hand¹²⁴. On one hand Germans are the only ones responsible for Holocaust and, only a few elements from the periphery of the Romanian society helped them, and, on the other hand, the acceptance of the existence of Holocaust, but not in Romania (with the exception of North-West Transylvania found under Hungarian occupation). The author focuses his analysis on the trial of Ion Antonescu.

4. The situation of Jews in communist Romania (1945- 1953)

In order to make a brief introduction into situation of Jews in Europe, and, in particular, in East Central Europe, it is important to note the volume of Bernard Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora. The Jews in Europe since 1945*.¹²⁵ In 1946, the number of Jews from Hungary was 145. 000, and in Romania, in the same year, it was 420 000.¹²⁶ During the Stalinist purge on Jews, the Russian anti-Jewish politics reverberated in all communist block. During the year 1949, in Hungary, is suspended the teaching of Hebrew language, and, in Romania, 122 of Jewish schools were taken over by the state in 1948.¹²⁷ In the same time, shows Bernard Wasserstein, in Soviet Union started a campaign against the cosmopolitanism, whose leader was Jdanov,

¹²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 108.

¹²² Emil Constantinescu Apud Michael Shafir, *op.cit.*, p.120.

¹²³ Michael Shafir, „Rădăcinile negaționismului românesc. Procesul Ion Antonescu” (“The roots of Romanian negationism. The Ion Antonescu's Trial”) in Antonio Faur and Ladislau Gyémánt (coord.), *Situația evreilor din Europa Centrală la sfârșitul celui de-al doilea război mondial (1944- 1945)* (*The situation of the Jews from Central Europe at the end of Second World War (1944- 1945)*), Editura Universității din Oradea, Oradea, 2011.

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 170.

¹²⁵ Bernard Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora. The Jews in Europe since 1945*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1996, p. 1- 158.

¹²⁶ *Ibidem*, p.VIII.

¹²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 50.

which affected the Jews who constituted a large part of the developed society. Jewish newspapers, schools, theatres, main synagogues were closed. The author expresses these repressive measures by the fact that Soviet Union realized that it does not have chances the political system in Israel. Then, Soviet Union started to sustain the Arabians from the vicinity of Israel. In other communist states, shows Wasserstein, providing the example of Czechoslovakia, it had continued the repressive measures against the Jews. Here, Rudolf Slanski, a Jew that had the function of Secretary General of Communist Party entered under the suspicion of Russians, it was accused as a spy, being condemned with other 13 members of the high communist *Nomenklature*, among the fourteen, 11 being Jews.¹²⁸ Slanski and other 10 colleagues were sentenced to death and executed in December 1952. Coming again to the space of Communist Russia, the author reveals the anti-Semitism existent in the last year of life of Stalin: "In July 1952 a group of 110 prominent Soviet Jewish intellectuals, among them the writers Itzig Feffer, David Bergelson and Peretz Markish, were subjected to a secret trial on charges of espionage, "bourgeois- nationalist activity" and armed insurrection with the purpose of separating Crimea from Soviet Union and establishing there a Jewish bourgeois and Zionist Republic which to serve as basis for the American imperialism".¹²⁹ The schools with teaching in *idis* language were closed. The process against the Jewish doctors who took place in URSS in 1953 was the last burn of Stalinist anti-Semitism. They were accused that they killed Jdanov and another communist leader. They were suspected that they had killed also other communist leaders. Only the death of Stalin put an end to this campaign. Another chapter is the *Impact of Israel*. While Jewish postwar emigration in Western Europe was a restrained phenomenon, because here the material conditions were better than in Israel, from Eastern Europe, found under Stalinist control, several thousands of Jews emigrated because they had to live from a social and political environment that they were not agree with. In the opinion of the author, the politics towards the Jews of communist states followed strictly the line of Moscow but with two exceptions: Romania and Yugoslavia. Indeed, several Romanian Jews emigrated in Israel in the communist period than Hungarian Jews and, in Romania, the emigration was allowed almost in all stages.

Concerning the figures of the Hungarian Holocaust we offer the next data. See the information below. In Hungary, the Jews had to bear difficult situations at the end of the war. Before the Holocaust, their number ranged to 756 000-800 000 in the extended Hungary, so it shows **Tamás Stark** in the study *Hungarian Jewry during the Holocaust and after liberation*¹³⁰. From these almost 600 000 of Jews died during the Nazi and Hungarian persecutions. Budapest was an important train station for the returned Jews. Once arrived in Hungary they saw that the series of difficulties continue. They were in the impossibility of re-entering in the possession of old

¹²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

¹²⁹ *Ibidem*, p.55.

¹³⁰ Tamas Stark, *Hungarian Jewry during the Holocaust and after liberation* in *Proceedings of the Eleventh Word Congress of Jewish Studies*, Division B, *The history of Jewish People*, volume III, Modern Times, Jerusalem, 1994.

houses, they did not have the money necessary to survive. They were helped by the international organisation Joint Distribution Committee to survive. Hungarian antisemitism was a feeling which did not take place all of a sudden, it grew in time. The interwar period was a stage when this manifested, including the law numerus clausus which limited the number of Hungarian students in universities and which was imposed in those years. Antisemitism did not disappear all of a sudden not even after the war in Hungary. Most Hungarian Jews chose assimilation in the Hungarian communist state in spite of the persecutions which they suffered before. A new system appeared at the horizon, the communism which promised the equality of everybody in the Hungarian state, no matter of their ethnics. A lot of Jews accepted this system and chose to keep secret the fact they were Jews and not to tell their kids this thing.

Ferenc Fejtő in his book *Magyarság, zsidóság* (Hungarians, Jews) showed that Hungarian Jews which returned from deportation were around 160 000-190 000¹³¹. According to the data furnished by **Tamas Stark** about the Jews returned from deportation in Hungary during the years 1945-1946, it is showned that before April 30, 1945 returned 9000 of Jews, while for the total of the year 1945, returned 82, 144 of Jews. In 1946, the returned Jews, according to his data were 1187. The total combined for the years 1946 and 1945 was of 83 331.¹³²

According to **Tamas Stark** the hypothetical number of Hungarian Jews at liberation X 1000, was detailed in the next table. We see that the total number of Jews at liberation from present Hungary was 185 000 of people, while the Jews found under Hungarian administration which survived were 224.000.¹³³ (Stark, 2000:250).

Table 3. The hypothetical number of Hungarian Jews at liberation X 1000¹³⁴.

The hypothetical number of Jews at liberation X 1000								
	Buda pest	Provin ces	Total in present territories	Subcarpa tian Region	Northern Transilva nia	Norther n Territor ies	Souther n Territor ies	Total for Hungary during the time of the war
Jewish population after the deportation	217	57	274	19	13	11	4	321
Lost people during forced labour together with the killed people or deported during Szalasi and emmigrants	67	22	89	2	2	3	1	97
Population at liberation	150	35	185	17	17	8	3	224

¹³¹ Ferenc Fejtő, *Magyarság, zsidóság* (Hungarianess, Jewishness), Budapest, 2000, 282.

¹³² Stark Tamas, *Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust and after the Second World War, 1939- 1949: A statistical review*, East European Monographs, Boulder, distributed by Columbia University Press, New York, 2000, 79.

¹³³ Ibidem, p. 250.

¹³⁴ The table was detailed in Tamas Stark, *Hungarian Jewry during the Holocaust and after liberation in Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Division B, The history of the Jewish People, volume III, Modern Times, Jerusalem 1994, p.250.

The returned Jews chose the assimilation in new Hungarian state. They suffered traumas more profound than the Jews found under Romanian administration. It is hard to understand this process of assimilation when they suffered so much.

Table 4. The estimated number of Hungarian Jews in 1945-1946 x 1000

Number of estimated Jews in 1945-1946x1000						
	Total of present territories	Sub-Carpatian Region	Northern Transylvania	Northern territories	Southern Territories	Total for wartime Hungary
Number of liberated Jews	185	17	11	8	3	224
Number of returned Jews	85	18	30	7	1.5	141
The total sum of Jews	270	35	41	15	4.5	365

Referring to the situation of Jews in the communist Romania, Hary Kuller, in the article *The Jews in the years of transition to communism (1944- 1948)*¹³⁵ describes the hope of Jews and Romanians that, after the war, Americans will come and save them from communism. Thus, the political landscape of the years of the years 1945- 1949 will be described as follows: “The years 1945- 1949 they were, thus, years of expectations and confrontations – between organisms and organizations, between their leaders, seconded by larger or smaller groups. It was an open field for positions and oppositions, for diverse solutions and benign adversities. A state of democracy, some would say; paradoxically the general social – political current was not leading towards democracy. At horizon it was visible a socialism of Soviet type; they were Jews who wanted it, others who wanted to avoid it making themselves cousins of the evil until they passed the bridge, until the emigration; last, but not least, not few decided to remain in the place where they were born in good or in worse times. None of the above mentioned categories of Jews did not “bring” the socialism in Romania”¹³⁶. [trans.] In the opinion of the author, most Jews, tired after the war and Holocaust, did not have the strength to fight with the new installed system, the communism and voted for emigration. Hary Kuller provides the figure of Jewish inhabitants in Romania, after the war, and that is 300.000 of Jews at the end of 1944, 375. 000 of Jews in Romania after some repatriations, and, in 1946 their number increased to 400.000 after the return from deportations¹³⁷. After their return from Holocaust, the Romanian Jewry, tried to regain its rights, especially the former properties. But for quite some time, they were not able to move back in former houses, they could not practice their former jobs, they encountered difficulties when wanting to enroll to universities, etc. The communist party wanted to dissolve the particular Jewish community problems in the larger category of postwar social problems. Although after the war, a large category of Jewish organizations

¹³⁵ Hary Kuller, “Evreii în anii tranziției spre comunism (1944- 1948) (‘The Jews in the years of transition to communism’) in Acad. Nicolae Cajal, dr. Hary Kuller, *Contribuția evreilor din România la cultură și civilizație (The contribution of the Jews of Romania to culture and civilisation)*, Editura Hasefer, București, 2004.

¹³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 155.

¹³⁷ *Ibidem*, p.156.

constituted, such as General Jewish Council, The Union of Romanian Jewry, Jewish Party, Romanian section of World Jewish Congress, Zionist Organization from Romania and, although concerned with Jewish problems they soon ceased to exist and it remained, until 1953, a single Jewish organization on the political scale, Jewish Democratic Committee. This committee will pursue the interests of communist party among the Jewish masses. The communization of the country and, in consequence, of the committee will continue until 1953 when it was dissolved.

Dan Diner and Jonathan Frankel¹³⁸ assert that the adherence of Jewish minorities to communist parties enhanced the hatred of peoples against the Jews and, in consequence, anti-Semitism increased. Because of the existence of anti-Semitism in communist societies, there were moments when, in East- Central Europe and in Soviet Union, the general politics of the communist parties was to reduce the Jewish presence in their ranks. It existed a Jewish preeminence which wanted to ensure communist dominance in Soviet Union satellite countries and Jewish communists played a very important role in this sense (such leaders were Jakub Berman, Hilary Minc, and Roman Zambrowski in Poland; Máthyás Rákosi and Ernest Gerö in Hungary; Rudolf Slánský in Czechoslovakia, Ana Pauker in Romania)¹³⁹. During the last years of life of Stalin it started in Soviet Union a political campaign against the Jews, trying to eliminate them from the top of communist party. This campaign culminated with the so – called “Doctors’ Plot” from 1953 when some Jewish doctors were accused of the death of some Soviet leaders. In Czechoslovakia it took place the Slansky trial (the trial of Rudolf Slansky and 13 associates, almost all of them Jews).

Liviu Rotman in the article *Normality that never came*, talks about the first postwar years as of a period of extreme “complexity”.¹⁴⁰ In the opinion of the author, it is a naïve thing to regard this period as the communist years when, in fact, it was a period of transition from democracy to a totalitarian regime. There were the years, when a part of Jewry hoped the removal of fascist reminiscences and the returning back to capitalist system. The Jewish population of Romania had suffered a trauma in the last years, under Hungarian or Romanian administration, but there were other new realities as the starting of communization of Romania and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 that influenced the decisions of Romanian Jewry.¹⁴¹ The author offers the figure of 350 000 of Jews that perished in Holocaust from which 240 000 were under Hungarian administration.¹⁴² In 1946, what was left from Romanian Jewry summed up 420 000 of Jews¹⁴³. The Jewish population in Romania was, after the war,

¹³⁸ Dan Diner and Jonathan Frankel, “Introduction. Jews and Communism: The Utopian Temptation” in Jonathan Frankel (Ed.), *Dark times, dark decisions. Jews and communism. Studies in contemporary Jewry*, XX, Oxford University Press, New York, 2004, p. 4.

¹³⁹ *Ibidem*, p.8.

¹⁴⁰ Liviu Rotman, “Normalitatea care nu a mai venit” (The normality that never came) in Antonio Faur and Ladislau Gyémánt. *Situația evreilor din Europa Centrală la sfârșitul celui de-al doilea război mondial (1944- 1945)* (The situation of the Jews from Central Europe at the end of Second World War (1944- 1945), Editura Universității din Oradea, Oradea, 2011, p. 237.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 238.

¹⁴² *Ibidem*.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*.

in a very bad physical and psychical condition. The new communist authorities did not solve the Jewish material claims, although it was adopted a Law for abrogation of Anti-Jewish legislative measures in December 1940. According to this law the Jewish population was reintegrated in their former jobs, they were received in the associations of liberal professions, but their property was returned slowly and only partially¹⁴⁴. The situation of Jewish Community was precarious. Some of its institutions (schools, hospitals) were in a process of regaining autonomy. The international organization Joint helped the Jewish population to survive after the Holocaust and war and to reorganize. The Jewish organizational landscape knew a revival after the war. The Jewish Democratic Committee that replaced the other organizations spread communism among the Jewish population and spread an anti-emigration in Israel discourse.¹⁴⁵ An important alternative to communism was appearing to the horizon and this was Zionism, the movement of Jewish emigration to Israel.

The problem of Romanian Jews' emigration in Israel is also approached by Cristina Păiușan – Nuică in the work *Relațiile româno- israeliene 1948-1978*.¹⁴⁶ The author signals that the relationships between Romania and Israel during the years 1948 and 1956, the period that interested us the most, developed under the influence of the cold war. The author signals a very important moment in the bilateral relations, namely instead of Palestine a new Jewish state emerged, namely Israel. Cristina Păiușan – Nuică shows that the bilateral relations Romania – Israel focused on two unilateral problems: the emigration of Romanian Jews in Israel and the condemnation of Zionist leaders. The author concludes: “The emigration of the Jews from Romania between 1948 and 1958 was a continuous process, but in the first years we can talk of a massive emigration, between 1948 and 1952 living from Romania about 120 000 of persons, more than a quarter from the Jews that were living in that moment in the Romanian state. In the following years, the Romanian – Israeli relations were leveled by multiple crises due to reducing of the quota of emigration, but also to the arrestment of some Zionist leaders and then to their sentencing and condemnation for espionage”.¹⁴⁷ [transl.] The author underlines the prominent figure of Ana Pauker in the quality of minister of Foreign Affairs in the first decade of emigration after the proclamation of Israeli state. The factors that altered the diplomatic relations Romania – Israel in their first decade of existence were the negative situation of Israeli press towards the political situation of Romania and the arrestment of Zionist leaders in Romania in 1952 with a negative impact on public opinion in Romania. The author reveals important details like the fact that Romanian diplomacy activates during the years 1951- 1954 under the auspices of the Soviet one. Anti-Semitism from Soviet Union, shows the author, that culminated with the process of Jewish intellectuals considered as traitors and spies in Soviet Union and White gown affairs, the affair of Jewish doctors from Soviet Union accused of the death of Soviet leaders,

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 239.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 243-244.

¹⁴⁶ Cristina Păiușan – Nuică, *Relațiile româno-israeliene 1948-1978 (The Romanian – Israeli relations 1948-1978)*, Editura Universitară, București, 2008.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

reverberated in Eastern Block. In 1952, Ana Pauker is purged from the Romanian Communist Party.

Liviu Rotman in the work *The Jews of Romania in communist period 1944-1965*¹⁴⁸, allocates a chapter to the evolution of Jewish Community in Romania in the postwar years. A first stage of development of Jewish Community, shows the author, lasted after August 23, 1944 until the end of 1947, it was a period of transition when it was tried the return of Jewish Community to normality after the Holocaust. After the elimination of Ion Antonescu from political life of Romania, it appeared A General Jewish Council lead by important Jewish personalities such as Wilhelm Fielderman and the chief rabbi Alexandru Șafran. This organization asked the annulment of Federation of Union of Jewish Communities. This organization transformed to the Federation of Jewish Communities from Romania. Slowly, the communists started to consolidate their own positions in the ranks of Jewish Communities. After the elimination of Wilhelm Fielderman, in 1945 it was created the Jewish Democratic Committee who imposed on the large scale of Jewish Organizations. An important problem, after the end of war, it was the abrogation of anti-Jewish legislation and the restauration of the Constitution from 1923. Unfortunately, although the Jewish sufferance of the Romanian Jews was acknowledged, the Jewish retrocession of rights and properties, was not considered as a priority of post-war governments. On December 19, 1944 the Romanian government adopted a complex law on the abrogation for anti-Jewish legislative measures. The law stipulates that anti-Jewish laws remain abrogated, the Jewish citizens received back their jobs or they wee integrated on similar positions. In what concerns the return of the houses of former Jewish owners, considerable delays followed. An important role in the survival of Jewish population in Romania had the international organization Joint Distribution Committee. Although, after the war, the Jewish population continued to have institutions of social assistance and sanitary institutions as the dictator Ion Antonescu denied to Jews social and medical assistance in Romanian state institutions. In what concerns the educative institutions, Romania Jewry relied on a large network of Jewish schools among which we mention 30 kinder gardens, 69 primary schools, 23 of secondary schools¹⁴⁹.

The author Liviu Rotman underlines the activity of the organization Joint Distribution Committee which had a hidden activity in Romania during the Second World War because of the fascist forces existing in Romania. The activity of Joint organization was correlated with the activity of Red Cross in Romania. After 1945, Joint involved effectively in Romania, supplying food and clothes, supporting school activity and the functioning of community institutions¹⁵⁰. The finances of Joint were tempting also the Romanian Communist Party, who involved in the ranks of the organization trying to use its financing. The Communist Party had not other aim than to demolish the Jewish Communities but right after the war, in 1945, their existence

¹⁴⁸ Liviu Rotman, *Evreii din România în perioada comunistă 1944- 1965 (The Jews of Romania during the communist period 1944- 1965)*, Polirom, 2004, p. 57.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibidem*. During the years 1944- 1945 the organization spent in Romania 6.500.000 of dollars in overall.

was still allowed. For the Communist, minority problems were not pertinent issues, the traditions and particularities of the different minorities being only a disturbing situation, than a given fact. All minorities will formally disappear in the storm of communism. Liviu Rotman shows that on June 1, 1949 it was established a Statute of Mosaic Cult which defined Jewish community as a religious community and not as a national community¹⁵¹.

Last but not least, Liviu Rotman in the book *The Jews of Romania during the communist years 1944- 1965*, refers to the process of migration of the Romanian Jews in Israel, a process that took place over the whole communist period. Around 400 000 of Jews emigrated from Romania during the communist years. Thus Liviu Rotman concludes: "The phenomenon of massive emigration of Jewish population after the Second World War is a complex one with special effects in different spheres: it reduced, finally, almost to zero the Jewish population from Romania, ending, in fact, a chapter of its history, it influenced the social and economic dynamics of Romania though radical change of a character in which the Jews had been a component not without significance. In the same time, it had influenced significantly the international relations of Romania (with Israel in the first stance, but also with the Occident, with the Arab states o with Soviet Union)".¹⁵² [transl.] In the first years after the war, during 1945- 1948, Israel was under British mandate of governance and according to the British, the emigration could have produced only illegally. Liviu Rotman mentions the ship Transylvania that carried Romanian Jews even in the period of British mandate. During the years 1946- 1948, tried to prevent the Jews that illegally wanted to arrive in Palestine.

But not all the attempts of the Jews to emigrate were successfull. Thus, 53 000 of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe out of which 23 000 originated from Romania were stopped in Cyprus when they tried to get to Palestine¹⁵³. The communist regime, in Romania, shows Liviu Rotman, did not encourage emigration, but this was a real consequence of more permissive times. It was an interesting strategy of the Romanian state to allow emigration but to start a campaign against it. Thus, many roumors of the time talked about difficult life conditions in Israel. In the opinion of professor Liviu Rotman, the process of emigration of the Romanian Jews was subordinated to economic and political interests. This process was coordonated by Romanian authorities, trying to elliminate the influence of Israeli authorities¹⁵⁴. An organisation dominated and created by communists, the Jewish Democratic Committee militated against Jewish emigration to Israel.

Liviu Rotman underlines that the bureaurocracy aggregated in this process was working slowly and had no sensitivity towards the Jewish problems. Because of this massive emigration, the Romanian authorities had to admit their failure to integrate the Jews in communist Romania¹⁵⁵. There were entire communities wanting to

¹⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 75.

¹⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 89.

¹⁵³ *Ibidem*, 92.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, 95.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, 96.

emigrate such as Ocna Mureș (350 of Jews), Adjud (249 of Jews), Târnăveni (403 of Jews), underlines professor Liviu Rotman¹⁵⁶. Rotman emphasizes the manifestation that took place in Iași on March 13, 1953 where 600-700 of protesters demonstrated against the Jewish Democratic Committee¹⁵⁷. Among the causes that lead to the emmigration of Jews, identified by Liviu Rotman, these are: the insufficiency of the salary, the danger of antisemitism, the fact that girls could easily get married in Israel, the idea that all Jews are leaving, the necessity to be close to the relatives¹⁵⁸.

In the problem of Jewish emigration to Israel, the communist party had an ambiguous attitude. Thus, Liviu Rotman quotes Vasile Luca and Gheorghiu Dej who were against emigration. So, in 1945 Vasile Luca said “you can not bring together [the Jews – L. R.] from all the countries to make an artificial state, on the expense of other people. Don’t you see what is happening now in Palestine?” and concluded “The only way for the Jewish population is [that] in each country to integrate them in the aspiration of that people, in economic life, social policy of the respective people with whom they live together”¹⁵⁹. [transl.] The propaganda against Israel was also reflected in *Scântea*, a central communist Romanian newspaper which will start a campaign describing the difficult conditions from Israel, but such a campaign will not have the expected success.

Rotman considers that Jewish emigration from Romania was possible because it, also, existed material reasons which determined Romanian authorities to allow the Jewish immigrants to Israel. Emigrating, the Jews were letting aside jobs and appartments which could be used by Romanian population¹⁶⁰. The unity of families was endangered with these departures. So, Rotman shows that at least 1194 of cases of parents separated from their children existed in Romania¹⁶¹.

The emigration represented a continuous process, until 1952, when the tendency of the communist party was to stop Jewish emigration, shows the author: “If during 1950- 1951 the rate of departures was high, around 30, 000 of Jews/ yearly – and in consequence we could talk of aliya of masses, in 1952 the rate will decrease to 360, rate that will maintain until 1958”¹⁶². [transl.] Also, Rotman offers an interesting approach of the problem of emigration in the relations between the two states of Romania and Israel. The approach is similar to the conclusions that one could notice from the documents from the collection of Bleoancă, Daniela; Nicolescu, Nicolae Alexandru; Păiușan, Cristina; Preda, Dumitru, *Romania – Israel. Documente diplomatice 1948- 1969/ Romania – Israel. Diplomatic documents 1948- 1969*, coordinated by Victor Boștinăru.

So, in 1948 Romania was one of the first states which acknowledged the legitimacy of the state of Israel. The external politics of Romanian state was

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, 97.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 98.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 98.

¹⁵⁹ Apud, Liviu Rotman, , *Evreii din România în perioada comunistă 1944- 1965 (The Jews of Romania during the communist period 1944- 1965)*, Polirom, 2004, p. 100.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, 102.

¹⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 103.

¹⁶² *Ibidem*, 104.

dependant on the politics of Soviet Union and Romania acted in consequence. The state of Israel always raised the problem of emigration of the Jews of Romania in its relations with Romanian representatives. The process of emigration was subordinated to economic reasons, the state of Israel promising to Romanian representatives that accelerated emigration will develop the economic relations between Romania and Israel. Liviu Rotman underlines the importance of the nomination of the painter Reuven Rubin as plenipotentiary minister of Israel in Romania. He was from Botoșani and he was speaking Romanian. So, Liviu Rotman summarizes the evolution of Romanian – Israeli relations in the problem of emigration: “If the position of Israel was to remind with any occasion of the problem of Jewish emigration, the Romanian part will permanently deny that “emigration” exists in Romania”¹⁶³. [transl.] The Romanian politicians perceived Jewish population as belonging to the Romanian nation, as enjoying all the rights and liberties in Romania, as being equal with the citizens of the country, and found it hard to acknowledge the failure of communist policies in the Jewish issue.¹⁶⁴

The issue of Jewish emigration was also approached by Radu Ioanid in his book *Răscumpărarea evreilor. Istoria acordurilor secrete dintre România și Israel*¹⁶⁵. Radu Ioanid shows that, during 1947 and May 14, 1948, no Romanian Jew immigrated to Palestine. At June 11, 1948, Romania acknowledged the new state. In a few months, Reuven Rubin was named plenipotentiary minister of Israel to Romania. After the creation of the consulates of the United States, the Soviet Union, France and Great Britain, Romania opened its own consulate in Tel Aviv. The problem of Jewish emigration, shows Ioanid, was the result of several controversies between the Romanian diplomats and their counterparts. In its dialogue with Ana Pauker, Moshe Sharett protested against the fact that the Romanian authorities stopped the emigration and asked for the liberation of seven Israelis, arrested by the Romanian state for Zionist propaganda. Ioanid shows that the Romanian external policy towards the state of Israel depended on Soviet Union politics, which encouraged the actions against Great Britain, but also had, in the same time, an anti-Zionist policy. In 1948, shows the author, Stalin supplied the ammunition that Israel needed to win against the Arab League.

But soon Stalin will start an anti – Jewish campaign. Thus, shows the author, he dissolved the Jewish Antifascist Committee, and reflections of his anti-Semite campaign appeared in Soviet press. Thus several Romanian intellectuals were arrested and the newspapers published in idis were prohibited. In Czechoslovakia, Slanski Trial takes place. In 1952, in the Soviet Union a plot takes place against some Jewish doctors accused of contributing to the death of some Soviet leaders, an accusation that had no real base. The satellite states of the Soviet Union were at the beginning encouraged to allow the emigration and to encourage the Jewish communists from Israel, shows Ioanid. In Romania, the American Jewish Joint

¹⁶³ *Ibidem*, 109.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, 109-110.

¹⁶⁵ Radu Ioanid, *Răscumpărarea evreilor. Istoria acordurilor secrete dintre România și Israel (The ransom of the Jews. The secret bargaining between Romania and Israel)*, București, Polirom, 2005.

Distribution Committee was destroyed and the Jewish schools and hospitals were closed. The communists tried to destroy the Jewish organizations, such as the Jewish Union from Romania. Thus, the Jewish Antifascist Committee was created and tried to subordinate the Jewish community from Romania to the communist party.

When Israel opened a diplomatic institution in Bucharest, manifestations were held in favor of Israel. In 1948, shows Radu Ioanid, the Romanian Communist Party voted a resolution that condemned Zionism. The author shows that it was a false idea to consider that the Jews brought the communism in Romania. So, in the next table, he shows the representation of Jewish population in the Secret Service Structures. We can notice that the number of the Jews was not particularly high.

In 1949, a brutal campaign against Zionists began in Romania. Approximately 250 of Jewish Zionist leaders were arrested. Radu Ioanid shows the ambivalence of the politics of Romania towards Israel: "In August 1949, the Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party reached a consensus concerning the emigration of the Jews. The party will allow the emigration, and, in the same time, will intensify the propaganda against it, publishing letters from Palestine that described *the miserable conditions* from there"¹⁶⁶. [transl.]

The issue of Romanian Jews emigration in Israel was also approached by the diplomatic documents from the collection *Romania – Israel. Diplomatic documents 1948- 1989*.¹⁶⁷ Since 1948, after the proclamation of the state of Israel, Romania appointed a legation of Romania in Israel at Tel Aviv. The problem of the Romanian Jews appears as a constant theme of negotiation between the Romanian diplomats and the Israeli ones. In a telegram from March 11, 1949, it is showed that the Israeli government is worried by the evolution of the emigration of the Jews from Oriental Europe. The Israelis shows their gratitude that Romanian government authorized the departure in Israel of several thousands of Romanians.¹⁶⁸

The state of Israel motivates its need of emigrants both because its military situation (is surrounded by hostile neighbors), but also because of the need of employees for its economic development. These objectives required a growth of population of Israel and a professional quality of the population. The telegram stipulates that, in the past, the first group of immigrants in Israel came to a great extent from Oriental Europe. In several occasions, the representatives of Israel ask for guarantees from Romanian government that the emigration will continue. The aggressive attitude of the Romanian state concerning the Zionists movement and the anti- Zionist campaigns from the Romanian press provoked the discontent of the Jewish state for which Zionist were working. It was required the emigration in Palestine of 5000 of members of the movement Halutz for which the emigration was the most important goal in life.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 83.

¹⁶⁷ Daniela Bleoancă et al., *Romania – Israel. Documente diplomatice 1948-1989, / Romania – Israel. Diplomatic documents 1948- 1989* coordonated by Victor Boștinaru, București, Editura Sylvi, 2000.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 6-10.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

The documents describe different concrete situations in the evolution of Romanian – Israeli reactions. Thus, Ana Pauker enjoyed a special prestige in Israel. The Israeli minister of External Affairs, Moshe Sharett named it “exceptional woman”. She was all the time informed of the evolution of Romanian – Israeli relations as she was a minister of External Affairs.

In 1949, Israeli representatives protested against the arrestment of the leaders of Zionist movement initiated by the Romanian state. The minister Sharett said that there can not be diplomatic relations Romania – Israel, if it is not reached a consensus concerning the emigration of the Romanian Jews.¹⁷⁰

The Romanian Legation from Tel Aviv had a propagandistic role, disseminating to the personalities and Israeli institutions the press from Romania, newspapers such as “Scântea”, “Roumanie nouvelle” and the newspaper “Unirea”. The legation has connections with the communist Israeli party, furnishing materials in Romanian about the situation from Popular Republic of Romania¹⁷¹. The Legation sent journals from Israel in Romania. The emigration of Romanian Jews was a problem especially important for the state of Israel, because the Popular Republic of Romania had a bigger number of Jews from the countries of Oriental Europe, a well known aspect by the Israeli minister of External Affairs, Sharett¹⁷². Sharett describes the hostile attitude of Israeli press towards Romanian state as an impediment in the bilateral relations.

The Israeli press protested against the prohibition of the emigration of Jews from Oriental Europe in Israel. Thus, the newspaper “Ha’tofe” published two articles about emigration in which it condemned the politics of Soviet Union, Popular Republic of Romania and Hungary: “What escaped from the furnaces is destroyed by assimilation. The emigration from Eastern Europe is a problem of life for us and must stay always at the day order. If Israel will not succeed to obtain the emigration, we are in front of a national catastrophe”.¹⁷³ [transl.]

During the years 1945-1953 on which focused our research, also, the economic relations Romania – Israel developed. In what concerns the arrestment of the Zionist leaders in Romania is a constant theme of reflection with Israel. In several diplomatic documents published in the collection coordinated by Dumitru Preda and Victor Boștinăru are formulated protests of Israeli representatives with regards to these arrestments which infringed the human rights. The attacks of Israel against the Romanian state are considered by the Romanian diplomats as manifestations of American imperialism. These were only a few aspects of the bilateral relations of the two states.

Concerning the Jewish properties confiscated by the fascists, Peter Meyer, Bernard D. Weinryb, Eugene Duschinsky and Nicolas Sylvain in their book *The Jews*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p.33.

¹⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p.35.

¹⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 37.

¹⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

in the Soviet Satellites¹⁷⁴ provided a table in which they emphasize the number and categories of Jewish property in Romania with the exception of Northern Transylvania confiscated by state during the years 1940 – 1944.

Table 5. Jewish Property (With the Exception of Northern Transylvania) taken over by The Romanian State 1940- 44¹⁷⁵

Kind of Property	Hectares ¹⁷⁶	Kind of property	Number
Arable land	42, 320	Mills	265
Forests	68, 644	Sawmills	115
Vineyards	2, 062	Other Industries	81
Ponds	78	Boats	152
		Buildings	40, 758.

The hope of Jewry that soon, after August 23, 1944, will regain back their rights, property, professions, was fulfilled, only partially. In December 14, 1944 the racial laws were abolished. But only in 1946, the citizenship of deprived Jews was given back by Minister of Justice, Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu¹⁷⁷.

In spite of the law that the Jews can practice their jobs again, the reality was that most Jews lived in misery, at the periphery of the Romanian society. The communist laws affected also the Jewish population, even if it was deported or not.

In Romania, show trials such as of Russian doctors' plot or the process of Rudolph Slanski followed the same Stalinist scenario. In 1948 Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, the leader of Romanian Communist Party, started the campaign against *Titoism* with the arrestment of the communist leader Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu. In 1952, there were epurated the Zionists eliminating Ana Pauker and Vasile Luca from the ranks of Romanian Communist Party¹⁷⁸.

An important role played in Romania the rabbi Moses Rosen who facilitated the emigration of Romanian Jews in Israel, maintaining the religious service for the Jews who wanted to stay in the country. The role of rabbi Moses Rosen in the communist Romania is very well described in the work *Dangers, tryings, miracles. The story of chief-rabbi Moses Rosen*¹⁷⁹, in fact his memories. The journal covers also the period that interested us, the years 1945- 1953. In his memmoires, he details

¹⁷⁴ Peter Meyer, Bernard D. Weinryb, Eugene Duschinsky, Nicolas Sylvain, *The Jews in the Soviet Satellites*, Syracuse University Press, The American Jewish Committee, 1953.

¹⁷⁵ The table was furnished by Peter Meyer, Bernard D. Weinryb, Eugene Duschinsky, Nicolas Sylvain, *op.cit.*, , p. 509.

¹⁷⁶ A hectare equals 2.471 acres.

¹⁷⁷ Peter Meyer et al., *op.cit.*, p. 518. Concerning the retrocession of Jewish property by the Decree of December 14, 1944 was mentioning: "All property formerly belonging to Jews, which is now owned by the state or in the possession of any purchaser, is regarded as always having belonged to the dispossessed owners and it is returned to them without any legal additional procedure." But another paragraph of the law stipulated that if in the former Jewish properties are now located factories, schools, artisan shops, the property returns to Jews only if, prior to their deportation, they lived in these locations, asserts Peter Meyer et al.

¹⁷⁸ More information about these trials you can find in George H. Hodos, *op.cit.*, p.93-105.

¹⁷⁹ Moses Rosen, *Primejdii, incercări, miracole. Povestea șef-rabinului Dr. Moses Rosen (Dangers,tryings, miracles. The story of chief rabbi Moses Rosen)*, București, Hasefer Printing House, 1991.

his fight as mediator between the communist power and the large masses of Jews with the view of facilitation of the emigration in Israel. The rabbi has a special power of persuasion in front of communists, convincing them that the emigration of Jews in Israel is a necessity. He plays a dangerous role, risking himself in any moment the liberty. The rabbi tries to stop the local Jews who were serving the Judaic cult to leave the country in order to stay home and to ensure the servicious service to the one who did not want to emigrate.

Stanislaw Krajewski, in the article *Jews, Communism and the Jewish communists*¹⁸⁰, asserts that communism is a chapter of national states from Central and Eastern Europe, but also a chapter of European history and of the history of the Jews. According to the author, communist system transformed the Jews from the status of victims to the status of oppressors. The author Stanislaw Krajewski talks about the condition of being a Jew in the communist times, a condition that advantaged the Jews during the communist era: "To be a Jew was sometimes an advantage for those ready to make careers in the emerging communist system. (...) I am not saying that Jewishness was ever sufficient for a career; not Jews, but loyal persons were needed, preferably those with no family ties. Jews were often perfect candidates since they were isolated, with no families, not connected to the prewar power elite, dreaming about normal lives and about protection by the state authorities". An alternative to communism was Zionism, the emigration of Jews in Israel, a weak movement in Hungary, but more consolidated in Romania. The author tries to resume the Jewish leftist communist orientation in ten theses elaborated with moderation and the wisdom of a witness of communist who looks back in time emitting valuable judgements considering the dark communist times.¹⁸¹

At the beginning, communist ideas attracted many Jews in Romania. This was also the case of professor Ion Ianoși who openly acknowledges his simpaties for lefty political spectrum. He tries to justify his leftist orientation in an interview: "I had the hope, after 1944, in a revitalization of historical and social climate. Even for minorities. I was belonging to two minority groups. I was a Jew, and at home we were speaking Hungarian. After that I became Romanian intellectual by my own

¹⁸⁰ Stanislaw Krajewski, „Jews, Communism and the Jewish communists”, in Central European University Yearbook(Public Lectures 1996-1999), www.web.ceu.hu/Jewishstudies/Yearbook01 accessed 1 May 2008.

¹⁸¹ We resume here the ten thesis emitted by Stanislaw Krajewski: 1. Marxism and communism are not only a chapter of the world history, but also a chapter of the history of Jewry; 2. The Anti-Semites overreacted the Jewish implication in communism and its consequences; 3. Communist Jews rarely cared about Jewry and Jewish community, they denied, most often, their origins. 4. Some Jews abandoned their community but later they reconsidered their attitude 5. The implication of Jewry in communist had an almost quasi-religious character. 6 There is no Jewish communism. There are general mechanisms that subordinated the Jews to the communist party. 7. Not Jewish traditions or Judaism led the Jewish community to Communism, but the social situation. 8. The road to evil is always paved with good intentions. 9. There is a Jewish responsibility concerning the instauration of comunism, that can be indirect, in the sense that not all Jews participated to communist but the Jewish community has to share responsibility for the participation of its members to communism. 10. It is needed honest research to evaluate the extent of implication of Jews in communism in Central and Eastern Europe.

decision”.¹⁸² [transl.] When the reporter asked him if he had truly believed in Communism, Ion Ianoși, a well known Romanian Academic, answered: „Obviously. I believed in Communism. I and my father had this illusion, utopia, hope, tell it how you want. Lately, this expectation was not confirmed. My father was practically sent away from the city of Brasov, renamed the city of Stalin, because he was bourgeois and he was lucky to be employed as a night corrector in Bucharest, at a Hungarian language newspaper.”¹⁸³ [transl.] Soviet Anti-Semitism reverberated in Eastern block. Thus, in Romania, Ana Pauker was eliminated from party and state hierarchies, although she had a prestigious communist past in comparison this the Romanian Communist Party Leader, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej¹⁸⁴. Last, but not least, professor Ion Ianoși acknowledges that the Jews will be considered responsible for all the mistakes of capitalist or communist systems, as scapegoats as it always happened in history: “The Jews will be blamed either concomitantly, either alternatively- for both bringing up the capitalism and the socialism. They would have created the greedy capitalist regime and they would have dominated the radical socialisms. Both assertions are to a certain extent true (partial and complex), and, in absolute sense, false.”¹⁸⁵ [transl.]

But there were, also, Jews who were imprisoned in the years 1945- 1953, the years we focus on, as state enemies or Zionists, or as former bourgeois elements. In this sense, remarkable are the memories of Șlomo Șitnovitzer and Valentin Saxone.

Șlomo Șitnovitzer in his work *The authentic document or memories from communist prisons from Romania*¹⁸⁶ describes the years he spent as a Zionist prisoner in the communist camps from Romania “at Jilava, at Malmaison, at Pitești, at Caransebeș, at Rahova”. His arrestment happened in 1950 when, during a trip to Bușteni, when some employees of the Security brought him to Bucharest in order to make some verifications. Imprisoned he describes the atmosphere from prison asserting that the purpose of the interrogations was “to force, with any price, the prisoner to acknowledge what is imputed to him, namely the fact that he had activated against state order and, moreover, he made espionage [...]”¹⁸⁷ [transl.] During the interrogations, the officer tried also a psychological pressure, understanding that he was not an ordinary prisoner, but “the great chief of the strong organization Bethar which had a severe military discipline being sufficient as I, the authoritarian chief and almighty of this movement, to push down on a button, as the thousands of Betharistes to start <<a revolution against the state order>>”.¹⁸⁸ [transl]. About the interrogations of the Security the author asserts that their extreme form was to send of the accused in

¹⁸² *Evreii și comunismul. O discuție cu profesorul Ion Ianoși (The Jews and the communism. A discussion with professor Ion Ianoși)* în, Costel Safirman and Leon Volovici, *Noi întâlniri la Ierusalim (New encounters to Jerusalem)*, Institutul Cultural Român, București, 2007, p. 163.

¹⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 164.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p.175.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 169.

¹⁸⁶ Șlomo Șitnovitzer, *Documentul autentic sau amintiri din închisorile comuniste din România (The authentic document or memories from communist prisons from Romania)*, Tel Aviv, 2003.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 18-19.

the caves of the Security, genuine rooms of terror. In fact, the novel, a diary of the years spent to prison, says that: “There were periods when the interrogations were “not continuing”, as said the guardians, when they did not succeed to take out of you not only what they would have wanted, but not at least a part of it; and this situation happened after months and months. Then they sent you back, in the caves of the Security, with the slogan “you will stay there until you die”. And they live you there a determined time with the hope of the interrogator that, passing the time, you will get tired and, finally, you will decide to talk. It was a source of punishment coming from the part of the guardians because normally each of us wanted this terror to be ended, to be under trial and sent to prison where the life was at least a little more bearable”.¹⁸⁹ But not all days were so terrifying. Living in prison was also a good opportunity for socialization and communication with the cell colleagues.

In the work *Hopes in the dark. Memories*, it is shown that Valentin Saxone as a Jew lost his right to practice its profession of lawyer at April 20, 1948, fact that the author explains by “the motif that it was pursued was the suppression of the right to exert this profession for fascist elements- they were distorted from its exercise all that were not wanted by the communist regime, all that were not regimented or they did not work under the guise of “long way comrade”¹⁹⁰. Ulterior he found that he was followed by a member of Security which approached his family in this purpose. He was suspended from profession for 10 years. The author dedicates a chapter to his activity after August 23, 1944. King Mihai had abrogated the existent discriminatory measures during the Antonescian regime. The author is one of the initiators of “Idea” Club, which grouped more intellectuals which wanted on this way to get closer to the Christian population and to combat fascism and anti- Semitism. But the activity of the Club was of short duration, because at the end of 1947 the Communist Party forbidden the activity of political organizations with cultural character. Another chapter is dedicated to Romanian Popular Party and to the elections from 1946, when, together with a friend, Petre Ghiață “we started in the year 1944 to create Romanian Popular Peasants Party, denomination changed later in “Romanian Popular Party” not to be confounded with “Peasants Social Party” lead by professor Mihail Ralea PhD, or with “Peasants National Party”, great party, historical, of which we tried to differentiate”¹⁹¹. [transl.] Among the principles of the party on the basis on which were settled the elections from 1946, I mention “Strong devotion towards the Crown”. In several occasions there have been made innuendos to “his bourgeois origins”; and from 1962 he is captured in Jilava under the accusation of counter-revolutionary and spy.

In spite of the information described in the last pages, Maria Ghitta shown that in the communist state of Romania, the Jewish problem did not exist. The state propaganda talked in term of Romanian people, Romanian nation, Romanian historical past, neglecting the existence of national minorities on Romanian state

¹⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

¹⁹⁰ Valentin Saxone, *Speranțe în întuneric. Memorii (Hopes in the dark. Memmoires)*, Editura Viitorul Românesc, București, 2004, p. 13-14.

¹⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p.47.

territory and denying the fact that, at least in the previous epochs they played an important role, too. Thus, considers the author, we don't have a Jewish problem until the Revolution of 1989: "The school books, the historiography, mass-media were speaking continuously about a face of the history of Romanians that never attacked other people being forced, in turn, in numerous times, to defend himself by waves of foreign migratory people. The Romanian people (entire and abstract) was (then) and had always been tolerant, hospitable, but firm in defending <<needs and people>>, after how it sounded the famous expression of national poet, Mihai Eminescu"¹⁹². Several false ideas about the Jews spread in Romanian people mentality and culture such as "The Jews brought up the communism", "the Jews demolished the communism", the "rehabilitation of Antonescu", "Iron guards were innocent", "negation/ minimization of Holocaust", "the Jews take advantage by the actual political order", "Jewish world conspiracy/ plot".¹⁹³

The topic of our paper lead us to try to deepen comparatively the history of the Jews from Romania and Hungary, to regard the situation of the Jews after 1945 from these countries in the larger context of communist space, separated by the occidental world by the Iron Curtain. The public space has very little to offer to the minority and their possibilities to manifest their own culture were not on the liking of the authorities. The people belonging to minorities were accepted to integrate in the communist society by renouncing to his specificity, to the features characteristic to his ethnicity, by integration in the public and cultural space of Romanian communist society.

Of course, it had always been a private sphere, less exposed to the sight, in which the traditions, religion and culture were perpetuated. Such a framework was the family and the relationships with the members of community whose particularity could not be noticed at first sight, being somehow overshadowed. The important fact is that such inter-community relationships existed. In the familial environment, the specific culture of Jewish community perpetuated in many cases on the basis of traditions.

In spite of the critics formulated concerning the communist regime and the forced integration of ethnic communities in Romania, the trend of accepting the majority culture offered to the Jew the chance to integrate in the new society, while several centuries they were regarded with suspicion or they constituted a *corpus separatum* in the Hungarian and Romanian space. The insufficient knowledge about Jewish community, the envy that it had been created concerning the Jewish Community concerning its strong enterprising spirit lead to the appearance of numerous prejudices and stereotypes concerning the image of the Jews in the mentality of our collectivity, as it shows Andrei Oișteanu in his book *The image of the Jew in Romanian culture*. After the war, the need of the Jews to integrate, to be regarded as a constitutive part of Romanian people, not to be regarded anymore as

¹⁹² Maria Ghitta, "Problema evreiască" in România ieri și azi. Câteva considerații ("The Jewish problem" in Romania yesterday and today. A few considerations ") in Ladislau Gyemant and Maria Ghita (coord.), *Dilemele conviețuirii. Evrei și neevrei în Europa Centrală și de Est. Înainte și după Shoah (The dilemmas of cohabitation. Jews and non-Jews in Central and Eastern Europe. Before and after the Shoah*, Institutul Cultural Român, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Cluj- Napoca, 2006, p. 189.

¹⁹³ *Ibidem*, p.190.

intruders, especially because they went through the nightmare of Holocaust and they were strongly affected physically and morally by the Holocaust years, was visible both in Romania and Hungary. The Jews tried to integrate in the newly created society, a lot of them, at the beginning, truly believed in communism. In 1945, they regarded the communism as the single force which could oppose to fascism, racism and xenophobia. Soon they realized that the new system was not a democratic one and their great majority emigrated. After the war, there were still left in Romania around 420 000 of Jews, so it shows Liviu Rotman. Among these, almost all emigrated in the communist years.

The present paper tries to explain the relationship of Jews with the communism and the condition of Jew under communist system. I hope that the pages that these pages will convince that the Jews are a particular ethnic group, sharing valuable old traditions, that they were not the ones who brought the communism, they only accommodated to it or cooperated with it, hoping that thus they will contribute to the setting of an egalitarian, idealist society or they will facilitate for themselves the emigration in “the country of Israel”.

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